



Heavenly Calamity

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Synopsis :

Calamity descends upon a tranquil world in the black of night, transforming it into a death game! This is a true apocalypse, but this is not the end of humanity!

Info :

<http://www.novelupdates.com/series/heavenly-calamity/>

Raws :

Translator :

<http://www.radianttranslations.com/heavenly-calamity/>

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Volume 1: Chapter 1 – Don’t Die a Second Time

Zhang Mu was half buried in a pile of corpses, his whole body drenched as though he had just been fished out of a pool of blood. He had nearly been chopped in half; a mortal wound stretched from his left shoulder down to the right of his stomach.

It was cold. Very cold. His life was slipping away, and his consciousness was gradually fading too.

The eastern sky appeared snow white. The break of dawn would end as quickly as it came.

The entire population of Jiang City had been exterminated in just 70 some days!

Four million people, wiped out!

The formerly large and bustling city had been reduced to a monster’s paradise.

It was probably the sound of breathing that caught the attention of the monsters. Heavy footsteps sounded nearby, and before long, a creature built like a small mountain appeared, blocking the light of dawn. The monster stood at three meters tall, had dark green skin, sinister tusks, large copper eyes, and wielded a blood-stained white wolf’s fang as a weapon.

The man-eating ogre, upon finding a survivor who was struggling on death's door, could not resist letting out a brutal and merciless before raising his wolf-fang club and swinging it heavily downwards.

Zhang Mu lost consciousness.

July 16, 2015.

It was only a brief moment, yet felt as though a century had passed. His consciousness, which had sank to the depths of nothingness, was suddenly dragged back from the abyss, and he jerked up into a sitting position on the bed as his consciousness flowed back to his body like a torrent.

'Where is this?'

Zhang Mu surveyed his surroundings before finally locking his gaze onto a mirror opposite of him. Its reflection showed a youthful face with dark hair and a disheveled appearance that was neither too handsome nor too ugly. His features were delicate and refined, though with a somewhat pale complexion. He had cold sweat dripping down his face. He looked as though he had just awoken from a nightmare, with a face full of cold sweat.

"Is this my apartment?" Zhang Mu touched himself over his entire body and with disbelief written on his face, he said, "Didn't I die in that battle?"

Was all that really just a nightmare?

He took a few deep breaths. The first thing to do is to calm down. The clock on the wall indicated that it was 21:30. If his memory was correct, only two and a half hours were left before the games began. Of course, it could just be a coincidence, but at this moment a familiar ringtone sounded.

Zhang Mu's heart abruptly became crystal clear. Something that had originally seemed like it belonged in the vague and distant future, slowly gained clarity in his mind..... He realized that all of this was exactly the same as the scenes that played had played out in his memories. This phone call should be from Sun Lin, his girlfriend from university... at least she still was, for now. If he wasn't wrong, once he answered the phone, Sun Lin would immediately ask "Where are you?"

A female voice was heard through the cell phone, "Where are you?"

Zhang Mu's heart sank as he replied, "At home."

"I'm downstairs."

"Why don't you come up?"

"Nah, you come down, there's something we need to discuss, just the two of us. I'll be hanging up now."

Sun Lin abruptly ended the call, and all Zhang Mu could hear was the sound of static. His confusion returned as he realized these exact same events had occurred in his dream. This was a serious problem; if his dream was actually true then that nightmare was going to happen in

reality. It would be like a replay of a film.

Sun Ling was waiting on the bottom floor. What she wanted to tell him had to be said face to face.

Zhang Mu thought for a bit before putting on his clothes and heading downstairs.

It was a chilly night. The streetlights pierced through the mist with a scarlet red glow. The world looked as if it was soaked in a bloody mist, saturated with a peculiar sensation.

Sun Lin stood under the streetlight in a beige t-shirt, cropped jeans and carried an expensive brand-name bag. She was young and pretty with blonde curly hair draped over her shoulders, and radiated an aura that caused passersby to turn their heads. On seeing Zhang Mu walking towards her, her beautiful expression immediately frosted over.

"Did you sleep the entire day?"

He'd once read a horror novel that claimed night air was more prone to inspiration and had affected a habit of staying up all night and sleeping during the day. But, seeing Su Lin's face with that same cold expression from his dream, Zhang Mu was overcome by an alien feeling. It is said that time can numb emotions and dull perceptions, but the grief and sorrow of this scene are only memories from my dream.

Sun Lin's face was expressionless and her gaze shifted to the side before she stated, in a voice devoid of emotions, "There's something

that's been on my mind for quite a while already. Can we find a place to talk?"

"No need, just say it here."

"I'm breaking up with you!"

Though what happened earlier could be explained as a coincidence, this confirmed his suspicions that he had really experienced this before!

Zhang Mu took a deep breath and calmly asked, "Because of Huang Kai?"

"You knew? That's great, I don't want to hide it any longer either." Sun Lin seemed to deliberately raise her voice, and quite a few of those passing by gave them odd looks. "You steadily improve yourself and treat others with care, but you lack passion. Though you give me a sense of security, but this era isn't about that, these days girls want passion and romance! I feel like you not only don't understand life, you don't understand love either, so I don't want to continue this relationship any further!"

Zhang Mu's face was still as a lake without ripples. He was calm and reserved, his black pupils seemed like there was an endless depth to them. This lack of response was unexpected; he was way too calm, frighteningly so. His eyes seemed like they could see through a person's heart. Their depth gave Sun Lin an uncomfortable feeling.

She was a bit flustered, but still opened her mouth to speak without

waiting for Zhang Mu's reply. "That's right, I used to like you, but then I realized that you weren't the type of guy for me. Huang Kai is generous and easygoing, he can give me everything I want. Unlike you, the one who only knows how to type on his keyboard in his room all day. I hope that you understand that you can't force feelings!"

Sun Lin knew all too well that he had a less-than-fortunate childhood, and because of that, Zhang Mu was not good with words. As a person who liked to read and write, starting from high school he was a somewhat well-known author in the horror novel scene. All the money he earned was spent on university fees, the cost of Sun Lin's extravagant shopping, replacing home appliances and paying for the new computer for his sister who had just started attending university. In other people's eyes, he was a reserved and gentle person. He would not show anger in front of others and was delicate in his actions. When facing a problem, at times, he looked like an ancient well without ripples, but he would take the time to mull things over whilst coming up with a plan to deal with it.

It can't be denied that Zhang Mu was an outstanding person. It was just that the disparity in status between Huang Kai and him was too large. The Huang family was the most well-known family in Jiang City, it could be said that the family was a thriving financial power. Sun Lin was a materialistic girl, there was no way she would pass this opportunity to become a phoenix who would rise to the peak, so she decided to abandon Zhang Mu.

Zhang Mu's sharp eyes turned threateningly cold as he said, " You think Huang Kai is better than me?"

"Of course!" When Sun Lin looked at his cold eyes there was a chilling sensation that she had never felt before. Those cold eyes of his were frightening. "You need to understand, I don't owe you anything. I found a

better life, if you're a true man you should be magnanimous and wish me all the best!"

Zhang Mu softly replied, "You're right, everyone has the right to pursue their own goals, this is inevitable. However, you shouldn't talk about my dignity as though I was just a stepping stone in your life."

Sun Lin was losing her temper, "What, what are you talking about....."

Zhang Mu went on without skipping a beat, "Seeing as you think your wuss of a new boyfriend sent you out to talk to me instead of doing it himself is better than me, as a man, there's something that I must do."

There was a black BMW stopped alongside the road about hundred meters away.

Zhang Mu suddenly dashed towards the car like he had caught the wind and yanked the door open, pulling out a fashionably-dressed man with a silver earring adorning his ear.

Huang Kai loudly bellowed, " What are you doing? Are you insane!?". He was taller than Zhang Mu by half a head and was rather athletic, yet, at this moment, he was the one being dragged out of the car and thrown heavily on the ground like a sandbag.

Sun Lin screamed, "Stop it!"

Huang Kai had kept the fact that he had been chasing after Sun Lin for half a month a secret from everyone. Today he was going to announce

publicly that he had succeeded. He had specifically come here today to see Sun Lin dump Zhang Mu, hoping for a show, so that he could take Sun Lin away in his new car in front of everybody and enjoy the despair on Zhang Mu's face. Sun Lin didn't mind putting Zhang Mu down, so she was happy to help Huang Kai with this plan.

Who'd have thought that Zhang Mu would not only be able to recognize Huang Kai's new car, but that he would also do something that went against his calm and level-headed nature; Zhang Mu had unexpectedly lost his head and committed an insane act in public!

Huang Kai swore, "Motherfucker, do you know who I am!? My dad is the bureau chief and if you dare touch a hair on my head, I'll order your entire family's death....."

Zhang Mu dragged Huang Kai up and bashed his head on the car, then followed it up with a left hook that knocked out a couple of Huang Kai's teeth, before nearly breaking his nose with a right.

Huang Kai was beaten to the point of him seeing stars and could not put up any resistance. Zhang Mu had already kneed him violently in the stomach, nearly causing his dinner to splatter across the pavement. Zhang Mu raised his arms and used his open palms to smack Huang Kai back and forth to the point where he could no longer tell left from right, leaving him reeling with cheeks swollen like a pig.

Sun Lin screeched in panic. The people passing by, attracted by the spectacle happening in front of them, surrounded the two men while discussing among themselves.

"Why is there a fight going on?"

"That rich kid was trying to steal someone's girl, so he's getting wrecked!"

"What's there to say? He deserves a beating, it's the right thing to do, thrash him!"

Several delighted youngsters were watching the scene unfold. After finding out what was going on they chose to stand around and watch rather than breaking up the fight, because, like many others, they hated the attitude of the rich and sympathised with their fellow commoners.

"Do you think I'm a soft egg that you can push around because your father has some power?" As Zhang Mu said this, Huang Kai tried to push himself off the street with his bloody nose and swollen face. Zhang Mu then cradled Huang Kai's arm and said tranquilly, "Come. Call me your father and I'll release you immediately."

"Fuck you...argh!" Huang Kai roared furiously. Before he could even finish his curse, the sound of his bones going kacha echoed through the streets, his arm twisted in an unnatural angle. It was so brutal that some people were starting to call the cops.

Zhang Mu grabbed Huang Kai's remaining arm. "You've still got an arm and two legs. You have three seconds."

"Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!"

With tears flowing, Huang Kai shouted three times before fainting from

pain.

Zhang Mu gave the unconscious Huang Kai a kick, "Good boy!"

Sun Lin was stunned, "You have you really lost it?!"

"Those who only wish to rely on others in order to live their lives, will forever remain as unwanted goods. Instead of handing your dignity and pride over to others, shouldn't you be grasping onto it instead? Sun Lin, that is the last advice I'll ever give you; from now on, we will have nothing to do with one another." Zhang Mu said hoarsely, looking up at the night sky, "The times are changing. I wish you the best."

Huang Kai lay sprawled on the ground like a dead dog, motionless. Sun Lin blankly stared at Zhang Mu's back as he left. This man who was usually gentle and reserved suddenly revealed a tough and violent side. It caused Sun Lin to be unable to calm her heart down, her mood mixed; it felt as though she had lost something precious, something she could never get back.

Zhang Mu returned to his rented one-bedroom apartment. It was not very big, but it was clean and tidy. There was nothing else of value in the room apart from the computer that he worked on every day. Zhang Mu was simply a 21-year-old from Yan City and fourth year student majoring in Chinese at Jiang City University.

After a simple change of clothes, he put on a baseball cap, and immediately strode out the door.

There were security guards in the floors below who were in the midst of investigating Zhang Mu's place of residence. He brushed shoulders against them as he walked past nonchalantly, headed towards a corner of the building that was shrouded in darkness, vaulted over the wall, and left the district. He could not steady his mind nor calm his thoughts as he walked through the bustling main street, as he hadn't yet managed to fully understand the situation he was currently finding himself in.

How could a dead man be reborn in the past?

Perhaps this wasn't the so-called rebirth after all.

Only, due to some special opportunity that was afforded to him, Zhang Mu had been fortunate enough to be granted a vision of the future. He was the equivalent of a beta tester for a game. Two months of special close quarters combat training had provided him with a lot of precious information as well as a sharpened constitution. His starting line was far ahead of any other player.

Zhang Mu could not bear being humiliated a second time, nor did he want to die a second time!

Zero, the game shall start on time!

Volume 1: Chapter 2 – Monsters Descend From the Heavens

Zhang Mu racked his brain trying to remember. He took out his cellphone to make a call. Not long after, the echo of an extremely mellow and soft voice could be heard.

"Hey, big brother. I've missed you to death! Do you have anything new to tell me about?"

Zhang Mu was cursed with a very unfortunate childhood. When he was young, his parents died in a car accident. After that, he was forced to stay at an orphanage and was not adopted until he was ten years old. Since he was already ten, his surname did not change. He also had a new sister named Chen Ting Ting who wasn't related to him by blood.

"Ting Ting." As Zhang Mu heard the voice of his younger sister, his tone shifted to a gentle and warm whisper. "What I'm about to say is going to sound crazy. No one else will believe it, but you'll believe your brother won't you?"

"Of course, Ting Ting will absolutely believe brother." She replied

"I am very serious. I haven't gone crazy. What I am going to say is very important. Promise me that you will remember this." Zhang Mu repeatedly stressed.

From the beginning, Chen Ting Ting looked up to her mature and earnest brother. For him to say these words, something big must have happened. The gentle atmosphere quickly faded.

"Brother, what happened?" Chen Ting Ting asked

"In two hours, the world will undergo a huge change. Countless horrifying monsters will drop from the sky. Don't ask me why because I can't explain it myself. These monsters will kill any human in their sight. The human race is in danger. Find a reason to bring mother and father to the police station. It will be safer there. Also, prepare something to defend yourself with as well as food and water. Remember, I am being serious here. Don't be afraid, some monsters are small and weak. Kill those if you find any. Once you kill one of them you'll get used to it."

Zhang Mu desperately told her

"What?, This is too unimaginable!" The young Chen Ting Ting, who always listened to brother, was a little doubtful. She couldn't help but ask, "Big brother, are you....." Chen Ting Ting doubted his words.

"I said it before, I'm not insane! There's no time. Don't interrupt me!" Zhang Mu knew what Ting Ting wanted to ask. "After the calamity strikes, tons of tiny spheres of light will fall down from the sky. These are the gift of skills. They will disappear after 24 hours. Each person is restricted to absorbing only one. However, 99% of the time, the skill is not at all powerful. Don't immediately use the first one you see as most of the good ones are guarded by the monsters."

Zhang Mu spent ten minutes explaining a bunch of useful information, and afterwards said, "Do you remember what I just said?"

Chen Ting Ting carefully asked, "Ah, I understand, but this is too"

Zhang Mu took a deep breath. "After all these years, has big brother ever deceived you? Promise me that you will bring mother and father to the police station. Whether this is true or not, in two hours time you can see it for yourself. I can only do this much. If the calamity strikes, you must protect yourself. Stay alive until the day we meet."

Zhang Mu proceeded to call several of his friends who he was on good terms with. They were friends from the same orphanage. For the most part, adoption resulted them living in different cities. However the passing of a decade was unable to break the bonds they had formed, their relationships with each other were still strong.

After withdrawing several thousand dollars, he bought a large rucksack and a large travel chest. He stuffed the rucksack full of chocolate and candy. Afterwards, he stuffed his chest with various cutting tools, a hammer, a large fireman's axe, two canisters of gasoline and several lengths of rope. Fully prepared, he waved a cab headed for Bi Jiang.

In the suburban district of Bi Jiang, a five hundred meter long bridge could be seen – the Jiangcheng Bridge.. During the calamity, an extremely strong skill sphere would appear on the bridge. If one could obtain its skill, one would be far ahead of the other players.

23 hours and 32 minutes have passed. 28 minutes remain.

Even after going through two months worth of training, life and death experiences allowed a person to grow the fastest, but this period of training was limited. These kinds of growth were also limited. Zhang Mu was mentally prepared, but his physical ability didn't differ that much from a normal soldier's. There would be a relatively larger amount of danger if he were to fight a higher leveled monster alone. If he were to be

surrounded by monsters, that danger would only increase.

The flowing water of Bi river crashed, hualala. Some days, the buzzing of insects could elegantly intermingle with the flowing sounds of moving water. The road was pitch black, not a single soul in sight. Occasionally, a bus or a truck would pass by.

After waiting for ages, sounds could be heard echoing in the distance. A large eight wheeled truck was coming this way.

Zhang Mu stood on the road with both his arms wide open.

Honk—— !

The big truck continuously sounded the horn, but Zhang Mu refused to move, standing right in the middle of the road.

Zhang Mu, holding his suitcase, began walking towards the truck.

A fat head squeezed out from the window of the truck, it was a fatty of around 30 years old. He was around 250 pounds; his neck seemed almost nonexistent. The fatty had a shaved hairstyle with a broad strip of hair remaining, with a round and fat head. The fat made his eyes seem to be all but narrow slits. His body was even bigger than putting two Zhang Mu's together.

The fat man had a cheap cigarette in his mouth. Slapping the edge of the window with force. The sound of his voice was like a roar, "Smelly kid, are you tired of living?"

Zhang Mu quickly apologized: " Big brother, I am truly sorry. I am a Jian university student. However I have an urgent matter at the moment. Can you give me a ride to the university?" He took out some money from his pocket, "Please."

The fat man's eyes widened when he saw the red, folded bill of grandpa Mao. Immediately opening the door with a greedy smile, he said, "Kid, you're in luck. Eh, that is, since it's the middle of the night, finding a car would've been difficult. Well it's fine.....it's a pleasure to help others, anyway. This fat gentleman will give you a ride. It's on the way anyway."

The driver seat was very high. Zhang Mu handed over his suitcase and bag as the fatty stretch out his hand to help him up.

Once Zhang Mu got on the truck, he threw the paper bill at the fatty, causing the fatty to close his eyes on reflex. Zhang Mu took a step, his fist dancing into the red bill and colliding with the fatty straight in his face.

If it was said that fat had the ability to lessen blows, then that ability was undoubtedly limited.

After being hit like that, the fatty saw stars. , The fatty swore out loud. However, before he could strike back, Zhang Mu kicked him backwards and followed it up with a swift elbow attack. The fatty's nose bled as he collapsed on the driver seat.

Zhang Mu took out a knife from his lower back. Holding down fatty, he pressed the knife to his neck. "Honestly, stop moving you fatty!" he threatened.

The point of the knife started to pierce the skin.

"AH——！" As soon as fatty felt the ice-cold tip of the knife gradually begin to pierce his skin, he let out a sound similar to that of a pig being slaughtered: "Big, big brother, d-d-don't! I really don't have money; my cigarette isn't high quality, and I only have one! I haven't even found a wife yet, please don't kill me!" He shamelessly begged.

"To see you this terrified! Wait you're already this old, and you still don't have a wife?" Zhang Mu said surprised

"I....I want to find one!", Fatty's nose was dripping wet as he reached out his hand to identify the wetness on his nose. Shocked, he exclaimed, "Ah, mommy, look it's blood! Blood! I'm going to die, call an ambulance!"

"It's just a small wound."Zhang Mu casually replied

Zhang Mu stooped down to open his suitcase. He took out a large fireman's axe.

Fatty shouted as tears began to flow from his eyes: "Murder! Save me!"

Zhang Mu positioned the blade of the fireman's axe towards fatty's mouth, "Shut your mouth, or I will make sure it will never shut again."

"B-b-b-big brother, let's talk about this, let's talk about this." Fatty stuttered.

Zhang Mu coldly replied: "No bullshit, get up and turn the truck around."

"Alright, alright!", Fatty, like a paper tiger, quickly turned the car around, "Big brother, w-weren't you going to the university?"

"I have to say, is your brain also full of fat?" Zhang Mu sneered.

The fireman axe swayed in front of fatty, he was about to cry. "I'm turning, I'm turning, I'll listen to anything you say!"

The truck turned and went towards the direction of Jiangcheng bridge, stopping several hundred meters from the bridge. The time was now 11:57, only three minutes remained.

Since it was now the middle of the night, there were no other vehicles on the bridge. Under the bridge was just the flowing water of the river. It was definitely a good place to kill a person and abandon their corpse.

Fatty realized this and was ten times more afraid, he trembled as he began to plead: "There must be a mistake, I have done you no wrong."

Zhang Mu took a towel that was hanging from inside the truck, "Wipe your blood, keep your hands on the wheel. If you dare to move even an inch, I'll stab a hole in your stomach."

Wiping up his blood, fatty eagerly put his hands on the steering wheel.

This youngster was about 20 years old. He seemed to be difficult to deal with. His speech wasn't fast nor was it slow. It was something fatty had never experienced before, from the start to finish the youngster was cool headed. He didn't seem like a robber, but a cold blooded killer! No doubt fatty's future wasn't certain with him in charge.

Zhang Mu's bright eyes watched ahead. Under the tangerine yellow lighting, there was not a single thing on the bridge. In his heart he quietly counted down.

"Fatty, what's your name?" Zhang Mu asked

"I....I'm called Pang Ren (龐仁)" Pang Ren replied nervously

"Pang Ren(胖人 fat person)? Ah, it really is a fitting name!" Zhang Mu remarked.

"Not fat person, it's Pang Ren. Pang as in huge and Ren as in kind/humane."

'Yi, this name seems a bit familiar?'

Zhang Mu's heart started to move.

It was as if he had seen a ghost.

Thinking back, wasn't the first berserker also called Pang Ren?

It was fate that Zhang Mu met him, the first berserker was also a fatty!

This chicken-hearted and stupid fatty really was the first warrior!

Zhang Mu unenthusiastically said, "I'm called Zhang Mu, nicknamed Mu Tou. You can stick with me."

Fatty beat his chest to make a vow, "Yes, yes, I was already thinking about it. Big boss, if you tell me go to the east I absolutely will not go to the west. If you tell me to roll, I absolutely will not crawl."

"There's approximately ten seconds left." Zhang Mu said.

Fatty couldn't get it through his head, "Ten seconds for what?"

It seemed as the sky was collapsing. The heavens let out a sound that caused tremendous pain, shaking the eardrums of anyone in the vicinity. Shortly after, a blinding ray of light appeared, one that seemed to bathe Heaven and Hell in a pure and pristine white aura. No matter how dark an area was, it was now flooded by that radiance. There was no source for that light at all. It was a wonder to how it was produced.

Not long after, the luminance started to lessen..

As fatty was trying to recover from what just happened, he simultaneously saw the scene right before his eyes as well, crying out in terror. "Mother, the sky turned red!"

The sky once full of stars had faded away, leaving behind a thick and dark red heavenly dome of heaven hanging over them. The surrounding environment also underwent a huge change. Tall trees emerged from both sides of the road. Moreover, another even more astonishing thing appeared. Millions of light rays shone on the ground, each leaving behind a monster as it faded.

Jiang City's bridge had over twenty rays of light land ontop of it. Each of them were now ugly looking monsters. The monsters had brownish red fur, sinistraly fierce fangs exposed with saliva dripping from the corner of their mouths, and bloodshot eyes. They looked as if they were a pack of dogs, yet they were walking like a human. With a height of about six meters, some were without clothing, some wore leather armor, some were equipped with clubs, and some were even equipped with machetes. Their ferocity struck fear in the hearts of humans.

Fatty screamed. "Monsters!"

Zhang Mu hurriedly covered fatty's mouth, "Don't make a sound."

Numerous droplets of light appeared covering the sky. These spheres of light resembled a vast meteor shower as they streaked across the horizon. Like raindrops they fell to the ground with vigor and life. They were floating on the ground, up on the branches of a tree, and even on the surface of the river. The spheres of light were everywhere.

Just as predicted, the game had begun.

Volume 1: Chapter 3 – A Rank Skill

What dropped from the sky were thousands of spheres of light.

A player was able to absorb these spheres and obtain a skill. However, there was a 99% chance the skill obtained would be of little value. It was important to absorb one of these spheres early on to survive as the spheres would disappear after 24 hours. Once a person obtained a skill, they were unable to exchange it for another.

Hundreds of skill spheres fell onto the Jiang City Bridge, a golden skill sphere attracting the gnolls to it. The gnolls were level 3 monsters. As such they were undefeatable by normal people within the first seven days, and twenty of them had begun moving in the vicinity. The skill spheres would dissipate within 24 hours, and these unique skill spheres were not only extremely rare but also exceedingly difficult to obtain.

That golden skill sphere was definitely the one that Zhang Mu wanted!

Zhang Mu quietly said: "Crash the truck into the monsters."

Fatty lost all color in his face. Unable to open his mouth in fear, all he could do was make a sound that went boo hoo.

Zhang Mu calmly said: "Listen carefully."

From the direction of Jiang City came the sound of explosions, the howl of monsters, and the cries of humans. The city had been overrun by

monsters long ago.

"Right now, nowhere is safe. The monsters are focused on areas where people are gathering. If you return from where you came from, you are guaranteed to die." Zhang Mu explained with a nonchalant tone.

Fatty's face displayed a myriad of expressions, but in the end, he gradually calmed down.

Once Zhang Mu saw that fatty had calmed down he said, "I'll take my hand off your mouth. You better not be noisy. If you are, I will chop you up before the monsters tear me to shreds. Is that clear?"

Fatty nodded his head forcefully..

Zhang Mu let his hand drop.

Fatty's whole body started to tremble, "Do we really have to drive into that?"

"Stop the useless chatter."

Fatty stepped on the gas, launching the truck towards the bridge.

As the gnolls saw the truck coming their way, they started to howl. Unwilling to dodge, they faced the truck head on.

Some of the gnolls went flying as the truck hit them. A few unlucky ones were pinned under the wheels, and all that was heard was ka ka ka of their the fracturing skeletons. The windshield was now smeared with blood. Fatty became momentarily stupefied before firmly stepping on the gas pedal and scattering the ranks of gnolls.

One of the gnolls jumped two meters high, landing onto the windshield. As it stared inside the windshield, the sharp teeth in its maw were exposed. It was a scene that would cause almost anyone's scalp to go numb. Fatty was paralyzed on the spot, a large area on his pants was already wet. He continued to piss all over the driver seat of his truck.

Zhang Mu's response was automatic. He lifted his fireman's axe and hacked the windshield into two. Only to hear a crisp hu la as the entire windshield was completely shattered. Of the pieces of glass that went flying, one of them created a gash in Zhang Mu's cheek. The axe split the head of the Dogman in two. As the gnoll lost its balance, it fell to the ground and was crushed by the wheel of the truck. Its skull was shattered into pieces and reddish-white liquid spilled onto the ground.

"STOP THE TRUCK!"

Fatty could only squeal frantically, seemingly losing his ability to think critically. As Zhang Mu shouted, he slammed on the brakes of the truck.

Before the truck could come to a stop, a gnoll came to the right side of it, smashing the glass with a knife. Not letting the gnoll come in, Zhang Mu lifted his axe and chopped at the neck of the gnoll. Its tough skin was cut open, splattering the driver seat with fresh blood and the stench of rotting fish.

The Dogman was still alive, its injuries causing it to be even more frantic. It kept trying to climb onto the hood of the truck, only to find out that the truck's hood was too small and was held at bay for the time being.

Zhang Mu again lifted his axe and began to hack at the gnoll's head. On the edge of the fireman axe was a lump of flesh, exposing the skull as blood poured out.

"AO AO AO!"

The gnoll frantically struggled as it tried to get up.

Zhang Mu struck it with the axe once more. KA CHA, the skull of the gnoll was split open.

This guy wasn't dead yet!

In the end, the skull was only thoroughly split open on the third strike. A disgusting mix of brain matter and blood sprayed out, and the truck was filled with the stench. The howl of the gnoll started to quiet down. Half of its body remained in the car even though it had lost its life force.

Zhang Mu was enveloped by a white light, and he heard an emotionless voice whisper into his ear:

<Prompt: having killed the first monster, you have been the awarded

the status of player!>

<Player information has been loaded!>

<Please pick a class!>

There were more than a dozen basic jobs. Among those included sword specialist, knight, berserker, assassin, elemental mage, summoner and so on. The system would transfer job information to the player. The player was not allowed to change their job after they had picked it. This would decide the direction the player would follow later on.

Zhang Mu pondered for a while, before making a choice – Ranger!

<Class selection successful!>

Class: Ranger

Life: 20 (100)

Mana: 20 (100)

Strength: 6

Vitality: 6

Dexterity: 7

Spirit: 6

Experience: 0

Every class could be considered different; none of them were the strongest nor the weakest.

The Ranger class was a physical-dominated class with strength considered inferior to berserkers and warriors, defense inferior to shieldbearers and knights, explosive strength inferior to assassins, stealth weaker than that of thieves, and ranged attacks weaker than that of snipers... It could only be considered moderate in all aspects with no prominent specialisation. However, it was very well-rounded.

The surface of Zhang Mu's skin became covered in light. A powerful force flooding into his body, his fitness increased by multiple times, comparable to that of a warrior from the Han dynasty, while his speed became by no means inferior to that of a professional athlete.

"Go backwards!"

Fatty did not hesitate, immediately turning the body of the truck. However, ten gnolls had used the chance while the truck decelerated to approach, having climbed all over the truck in two or three seconds.

"Don't panic!"

Fatty slammed on the gas. The truck violently charged backwards towards the bridge, catching several of the gnolls off guard and crushed them into patties with the wheels of the truck in the process. The rest of the gnolls were scattered all over the truck like ants, while the truck continued to accelerate, almost as if it was a mad beast.

At that moment, a gnoll climbed on the glass on the left side and proceeded to throw a knife, shattering the glass. "Ah! – " Fatty was shocked and jerked the steering wheel, throwing off the truck's balance. In the next moment, the whole earth seemed to turn on itself

"Boom!–"

An earth shattering noise erupted as the torn and ragged truck tipped over to the right. Its heavy frame shooting off sparks as it slid forward a few meters, scattering debris all over the ground, its momentum horrifying.

"You really fucked up!" Zhang Mu was severely wounded when the truck flipped, his head bleeding badly, and his health reduced to roughly 80. He took out a hammer from the luggage, passing it to Fatty and said, "Take it, we're going to need to defend ourselves!"

Zhang Mu used the axe to clear away the shards of broken glass and quickly climbed out from the broken windshield.

There was a thick atmosphere of blood outside that would have made a person gag. Forty-five gnolls bodies were crushed and strewn all over the place. Their blood and guts littered all over the ground. However, to Zhang Mu, these odors and images were already commonplace, and he

did not feel any sense of discomfort.

The golden sphere was about 50 meters away.

Although the gnolls were strength-type monsters, because of a level advantage, they were no slower than Zhang Mu. To a normal person's constitution, there was basically no comparison.

A gnoll was still stuck trying to extract itself from under the side of the toppled truck. Zhang Mu jumped off the truck, aiming for the Dog man's head with the axe, splitting its head on the spot, killing it instantly. This immediately raised his experience from 0 to 33.

In regards to the monsters that were on the bridge, the knife wielding gnolls were level 3 common monsters, the club wielding gnolls were level 2 common monsters. The gnoll that was killed was a knife wielder, and exceeded that of a level 2 monster; thus granting a significant amount of experience.

Zhang Mu jumped from the truck and bolted towards the golden sphere. At that moment, there was a club wielding gnoll blocking the front, raising its club and aiming towards Zhang Mu's head. Zhang Mu did not panic in the slightest. He leaned to the side dodging it by a hair's breath. Using the momentum from his charge, he ruthlessly smashed into the gnoll's abdomen, splattering blood everywhere and spilling its intestines all over the ground.

The club wielding gnoll collapsed on the ground, wailing.

Zhang Mu brought up the axe, splitting the gnoll's head, killing it on the spot.

The golden sphere was now right in front of him.

Zhang Mu could not wait to pick it up, so he immediately touched the fist-sized sphere with his hand. Upon contact, information was transmitted over into his mind.

<Prompt: Do you want to absorb this skill now?>

This skill was not bad!

A Rank skill, highest level: 9, consumes 50 mana upon use, grants 1 second of invincibility, skills below S class have their cooldown times removed, all attributes are increased by 25 for 120 seconds, and has a cooldown of 60 minutes.

Skills were separated into seven ranks; S, A, B, C, D, E and F. A rank skills had to be found and could not be made. Besides that, within two months, even D rank skills would be extremely rare. Only by killing an extremely strong boss or finishing an extremely high difficulty quest would one be receivable. Soon, no more than ten people would have A rank skills. Every one of them were lucky enough to earn it from the skill spheres.

Invincibility!

Cooldown removal!

Temporary attribute boost!

This was undoubtedly godlike!

Zhang Mu did not have time to rejoice. Two knife wielding Dog men furiously barked as they charged towards him. Knife wielding gnolls were level 3 monsters with a large attribute advantage over Zhang Mu. The knife wielding gnolls carried rusty machetes. They tore up fierce winds as they slashed at Zhang Mu. Zhang Mu used the skill without a thought!

At the moment when a gnoll swung his machete, Zhang Mu was surrounded by rays of light. Temporarily invincible and unable to take any damage. The gnoll staggered in shock. Zhang Mu wheeled around his axe to chop. He had to chop three to four times to kill the gnoll. Only by aiming for the head could further damage be inflicted. Using only an axe, Zhang Mu was able to crack open the dog man's skull, immediately exterminating its life.

Zhang Mu then flung the fireman's axe, sweeping it towards the other knife wielding gnoll, knocking it airborne and causing it to fall heavily to the ground. Its mouth was completely split open with its tongue hanging out. Its teeth were scattered across the floor. Wailing incessantly, it struggled to get up. With its life value reduced to 35, Zhang Mu stamped on its body, ruthlessly hacking at its head.

Experience reached 99!

The big truck was surrounded by four gnolls. With one already climbing into the car, Fatty's shocked roars erupted from within. Zhang Mu rushed

towards the truck with his axe, heavily slamming it into the back of a gnoll and immediately cutting down its health by 20. He then dragged the stick wielding gnoll to the ground. He raised up the axe and heavily slammed it down on the gnoll's neck. It broke, causing a 1 meter fountain of blood to spurt out.

<Prompt: level up!>

Amidst the system's prompts, Zhang Mu rose to a level 2 ranger. His wounds healed, and his attributes significantly increased as he was enveloped in a warm light.

Even before the results had disappeared, Zhang Mu's attributes had already increased, completely rising to a whole new level. Now, he was by no means inferior to a level 3 knife wielding gnoll. Zhang Mu swung his axe. He one hit killed gnolls with his head shots and dealt varying damage on the parts he hit, taking no more than four chops to kill each gnoll.

Simultaneously, Fatty's face flushed. Roaring loudly, he swung his hammer, smashing a gnoll's canine's into pieces. Fatty also jumped up, using mind numbing strength to hysterically smash a stick wielding gnoll's face into a pulp with several blows, splattering blood all over Fatty's face. Only after the fourth blow did the gnoll's skull cave in, shattering under Fatty's barrage.

Zhang Mu detached the gnolls' corpses from the vehicle, loudly yelling, "Fatty, grab out the bags and luggage. We need to leave this place." After Fatty threw out the luggage and bags, Zhang Mu pulled him out from the overturned truck.

Fatty could not help but cry out in shock, feeling the blood on his face with his hands. His two legs trembled as he stammered, "Oh – oh my god – I killed a I killed a monster!"

Volume 1: Chapter 4 – Gnoll Choppfer

Fatty may have seemed timid and insignificant at first glance, but within his bones there was a sort of tenacity that yielded courage exceeding that of a common man's in a time of great peril, an extremely rare attribute. People tended to need a significant amount of time to adapt due to their originally peaceful lives and even those normally brave would panic in fear upon meeting a group of murderous hostile monsters. Therefore, early in the calamity, very few people dared to fight the monsters.

It was no coincidence that Fatty would later become the first berserker.

Zhang Mu briefly glanced at Fatty's crotch and said scornfully, "Old mister was scared until he pissed his pants, such a waste of putting on a couple hundred kilograms!"

"Don't poke fun at my sore spot! I also did not want to put on so much weight." Fatty distressingly said, "Besides, are you even a human? How can I even be compared to you!?"

Zhang Mu created a party and invited Fatty into it. As they walked past the gnoll corpses, Zhang Mu noticed there was a small object suspended in mid air, a finger-sized mini-machete. Ordinary monsters usually had a very low drop rate, and even after killing a couple of thousand you might not get a drop. To find a piece of equipment after a mere few minutes of effort could be considered as having inhumane luck.

As soon as Zhang Mu touched the mini-machete, it immediately disappeared and reappeared in his backpack.

Players originally had five spaces in their backpacks, and could only store objects with attributes.

Zhang Mu removed the equipment from his backpack and a heavy looking knife appeared in his hands. The knife was one meter long, slightly heavy with its tip curved backwards, making it very similar to a machete. The knife's handle was a pitch black with a blade as white as snow and here and there you could see some signs of wear and tear.

(Inferior Black Iron), Attack: 5, Durability: 15/15.

Equipment quality could be divided into different categories: Black Iron, Bronze, Silver, Gold, Dark Gold, Epic, Legendary, Miracle, and Mythical. A total of nine grades. The higher the quality of the equipment, the stronger its properties, with Black Iron possessing the lowest quality. However, at the moment it was priceless, its usability far exceeding that of the fireman's axe.

Fatty immediately cried, "This knife is good enough to cut the wind!"

Zhang Mu passed the fireman axe to Fatty while saying "Don't talk nonsense and let's go!"

As the two left the bridge, they met another gnoll that dropped two gold coins and although two gold coins were nothing compared to the mini-machete, it was still better than nothing.

While panting and dragging the luggage and fireman's axe, Fatty cried

"Boss, wait for me, don't run so fast!"

Zhang Mu glanced backwards to realize that Fatty was being left far behind. "You couldn't possibly not have selected a class right...?"

Just by choosing an occupation, one's strength would rise. Even if it was the 100 kilogram Fatty, he should not have been running so slow.

"Occupation?", only then did Fatty remember that prompt in his ears that he received when he killed the monster, a flood of job information entering into his mind, "So many classes... Which one should I choose?"

Zhang Mu irritably snapped, "Choose yourself!"

Fatty smiled wryly, "I suffered from hydrocephalus when I was young, so my brain isn't that great. Perhaps you can give me an idea?"

"Since you've already grown to be 100 kilograms, no point wasting it. Choose the berserker class."

"What does that have to do with being 100 kilograms! Don't link everything to my weight problems!"

Having said that, Fatty stretched out a finger and selected the berserker class

Occupation: Berserker

Health: 30 (100)

Magic: 10 (100)

Strength: 10

Vitality: 6

Agility: 6

Spirit: 3

Experience: 0

The berserker was a melee based combat class and had the highest strength, as well as an output damage which was only second to that of assassin's and the overall power was second to that of an elementalist. Upon selecting his class, Fatty felt like his body was filled with infinite power and with the strength of a mature bull.

The two people ran towards the bus station about five to six kilometers away, a feat easily accomplished within 15 minutes due to their improved constitutions.

"I don't understand. Why are we going to the bus station?" Fatty asked, carrying both his heavy body and the oversized luggage on his back as he ran. "Since there are monsters everywhere, we should find someplace safe to hide."

Zhang Mu only glanced at him. "Don't ask so many questions."

From their front, waves of strange sounds emerged, causing them to slow down. Fatty raising the axe in apprehension.

The ground was littered with flesh and guts, fresh blood flowing everywhere. Soon after, they came upon the corpses of several humans that had been attacked. Four or five ugly monsters were dismembering them, dragging them to the flower bed in the middle of the road, biting and chewing on the bodies with great relish.

The monsters were about 1.5 meters tall, their bodies covered in yellow fur with a speckled pattern with a pair of cat ears, a long tail and mouths that issued "ow ow" noises.

As the two of them had player qualifications, they could see a part of the monster's information by focusing their gaze on the monsters, eventually causing a wall of text to emerge.

Level 2 ordinary monster, Health : 25 (100), Mana : 10 (100), Properties : ???, Skills : ???

"Damn! These monsters are eating people!" Fatty felt really nauseous, contracting his neck as he said, "Since they haven't noticed us yet, why don't we bypass them?"

Zhang Mu noticed there were two blue coloured skill spheres within the flower bushes. They were probably pretty good skills, so he directly

ignored Fatty and walked towards the bushes, raising his knife.

The Cat-men were speed-type monsters and had very good reflexes. Their keen hearing picked up on the approaching party, and they stood up immediately, their slitted eyes reflecting the faint light. Blood and flesh dripped from their mouths as they loudly issued "Meow!" sounds and pounced with their four limbs. The Cat-men's primary weapons were their claws, and while lacking in attack power, they were extremely fast.

Zhang Mu's speed was slightly inferior to that of the Cat-men's, but his timing was extremely accurate. As he dodged the Cat-man's attack, he chopped into the Cat-man's abdomen. The Machete's blade sliced open its fur; a waterfall of its intestines and guts fell out as its health dropped with a "whoosh" sound, from 25 points down to 7, a loss of nearly 70%. Zhang Mu kicked the severely injured monster over, resolutely brought up the knife, and claimed its life.

At that moment, another Cat-man pounced over from the side and while Zhang Mu's reaction was fast enough, his body could not keep up, forcing him to slant sideways to dodge. Barely missing his vital points, the attack left five deep claw wounds stretched across his chest. The Cat-man's claws were elongated, leaving a tearing pain that would cause a person's vision to go black. Zhang Mu's recently refilled health slid down to 79 points.

Zhang Mu grasped the knife's hilt and a cold light flashed across the Cat-man's neck, almost cutting its neck wide open. The slash was ruthless and accurate. A spike of blood erupted from its neck. Zhang Mu faced the third Cat-man, using a gap in its attacks to dodge before putting it down in three blows.

"Help me!"

Fatty was being beaten by a Cat-man. Because of his lack of combat experience, he could only rely on aggression, swinging the fireman's axe six to seven times without touching the Cat-man even once. His back and shoulder had been clawed by the cat man several times, and he nearly fainted from the pain.

Zhang Mu rushed over to attack it, promptly cutting down the cat man with his blade.

"I almost lost my life just then," Fatty cried out in shock. "Your skills are too great, were you in the special forces in the past?"

Zhang Mu was too lazy to bother with him, picking up the two gold coins that the Cat-man dropped and the two blue skill spheres from within the lawn of flowers as he walked away. Upon identifying the two skills, he passed them to Fatty to keep.

D rank skill, maximum level of 5. With a maximum attack distance of 30 meters, dash at 200m/s to strike the target, causing 100 attack with 5 points of damage, and a one second of stun to the target, consuming 5 points of mana with 3 minutes of cool down time.

In the early levels, D rank skills were very precious. Although not as strong as Zhang Mu's A rank skill, it's still an attack skill, very practical for the current situation.

Fatty cried out in pleasant surprise: "There is a skill in the light sphere!"

Zhang Mu said, "These are skills gifted by the system to prevent players from dying out. Each person is only allowed to have one, so don't expect to be able to absorb another. Don't waste any more time." He tossed the other blue ball of light into his backpack, and they continued towards the bus station.

Along the way, they sporadically met a few monsters, but managed to get to the bus station successfully, without major issues. From afar, they smelled the sickly thick smell of blood.

Not too far from there, they saw several big white buildings; Jiang City University Hospital!

By following this road, a few miles down would be the Jiang City University main campus.

The bus station had recently been renovated, having been closed to the public, there wasn't anyone else around. However, regardless of whether it was the hospital or the university campus, this was a densely populated area. The more densely populated the area, the greater the number of monsters that were spawned. Therefore, this area could be considered to be a very dangerous area.

Zhang Mu secretly brought Fatty with him to the bus station parking lot. Although the distance from the hospital was very far, they could clearly hear the sound of people screaming and the roars of monsters. There were barks of gnolls, the meows of Cat-men, and many other indistinguishable sounds.

The hospital's glass windows have been dyed red, dripping with fresh blood. That place... had mostly likely become a killing ground!

Fatty's two legs were trembling as he spoke, "Isn't it pretty good if we just hide here on the outskirts?

Zhang Mu stared at him saying, "No-one forced you to follow me."

This promptly shut Fatty up.

Apart from the gnolls and Cat-men that the pair saw on the street, there were also many monsters that they hadn't encountered before. Several of these monsters were not unfamiliar, as they were often portrayed in computer games or on the television.

There was a type of monster that had green slippery skin, a long nose, sharp ears and emitted loud frog-like croaking sounds from its mouth.,.

Level 3 common monster, Health : 30, Mana: 20 (100), Attributes: ??, Skills: ??

There was also a humanoid monster that was shorter than a goblin, about 1.3 meters tall, with gray, shriveled skin and a skinny, hairless body, accompanied by pointy ears and eyes that bulged outwards with a mouth full of sharp incisors-like teeth. Its grey skin folded on itself, somewhat like a ten-year-old man.

Level 3 common monster, Health: 20 (100), Mana: 30 (100). Attributes: ??, Skills: ??

There was a veritable horde of monsters.

Zhang Mu whispered to Fatty, "Enter the bus station, but do not disturb the monsters."

Fatty gulped down a mouthful of saliva and voiced his agreement, " Y- y-yes!"

Zhang Mu walked towards the bus station. Fatty trembled as he followed closely behind. Zhang Mu had long ago calculated the awareness range of the monsters and calmly walked in their visual blind spots, avoiding the sense of smell of the gnoll as he walked closer to the bus station. Inside the iron gate was the car park with a dozen motor coaches and buses parked inside, but without a single person in sight.

Zhang Mu silently slid the luggage through the iron gate, making a hand gesture toward Fatty to enter the car park. Fatty started to climb the gate, squeezing his way slowly through the half opened gate. Thankfully his constitution had improved because of his Berserker occupation, otherwise he would have gotten stuck. Just as Fatty climbed half way, an accident occurred.

Fatty did not properly hold his axe, and with a "Ke-dang" sound, it crashed onto the floor. This immediately attracted the notice of the monsters in the vicinity.

"Is it possible for you to be any more retarded?" scolded Zhang Mu, picking up the axe as he jumped, quickly climbing the iron gate and past Fatty in two to three breaths and entering first. "Hurry up and come

down!"

The whole 100 kilograms of Fatty's body fell heavily to the ground, causing the earth to shake. The horde of monsters were attracted to the sound and started gathering outside the parking lot, roaring continuously.

"We're finished! This time I really fucked up. Boss, I've dragged you down!"

"Can you not add to my troubles?" Zhang Mu was resisting the urge to kick Fatty. "Go, they won't be able to enter for the time being."

Be it gnoll or Cat-men, they had no way of passing through the 3 meters of iron gate, despite being stronger than the average man.

As a relatively simple person, Fatty was unable to suppress his curiosity. As he opened his mouth to ask, he realised that there was a person's silhouette behind Zhang Mu. It was a tall man wearing a cape, with a black hood covering half his face while still exposing a portion of his bandage-covered face. A strange red light shone from his red eyes, creating a chilling atmosphere, as the inhuman creature sat on a tall black van.

"Oh my God, there's a demon!"

Volume 1: Chapter 5 – The Mysterious Merchant

[Mysterious Merchant] (Neutral Party), Level: ??, Attributes: ??, Skills: ??.

Description: A merchant that can appear randomly within a town or field, also known as the continent's most mysterious smuggler, selling equipment that cannot be bought at ordinary stores, with a low probability of selling rare equipment, as well as stocking some specific equipment, skill books and skill scrolls.

From obtaining the A rank skill to travelling to the bus station to meet the Mysterious Merchant, these were all part of Zhang Mu's plan to facilitate the creation of a larger advantage.

The Mysterious Merchant's appearance was a very important aspect of his plan. No matter where he appeared, he would not linger for more than six hours, and the probability of encountering him was less than winning the lottery. However, in the past, the first place he had appeared was the bus station.

Zhang Mu dragged the trembling Fatty over, walking up to face the Mysterious Merchant. The merchant sat on a black coloured van. The van was four metres high, completely made of metal, with its entire body pitch black, giving off a very foreboding feeling.

"Otherworldly warriors, to have met me, you are extremely lucky." The merchant's voice was hoarse and deep, and he jumped from the top of the van before continuing, "Welcome to the mystery shop, our products are of extremely good value, and will definitely satisfy you."

Zhang Mu nodded his head. "Let me first take a look at your

goods."

The Mysterious Merchant turned and kicked the van with his foot, loudly shouting, "Hey, assistant, we have customers!". The van opened, and a long shelf was pushed out. More than 20 different items were hanging on it, each one having varying properties.

[F grade Monster Dictionary] (Dawn Camp), a record of the level 1 – 10 common monsters, boss monster information and data. The price is 10 gold coins. One left in stock.

[Area Map] (Dawn Camp), a record of the terrain of the local region, monster spawn points for various areas, as well as a copy of the current location. The price is 100 gold coins. One left in stock.

[Post Announcement] (duration of six hours), E grade item, lowest level of Post, can be used to post a thread in the [Forum] to areas in the region, it will expire after the duration of six hours. The price is 50 gold coins. Two left in stock.

[F+ rank skill book, Fierce Strike], class restricted: Berserker, Shieldbearer and Knight. The price is 300 gold coins.

[F+ rank skill book, Assassinate], class restricted: Thief, Assassin, Hitman and Ranger. The price is 300 gold coins.

[F rank skill book, Backstab], class restricted: Thief, Assassin and Hitman. The price is 200 gold coins.

[F rank skill book, Quick Step], class restricted: Assassin and Ranger. The price is 200 gold coins.

.....

Within the twenty plus goods, there was information, equipment, skill upgrade scrolls, and skill books. The only problem was that the price of these goods mostly surpassed that of a few hundred gold coins, completely unaffordable to players at the moment.

After inspecting the goods, Zhang Mu spoke, "I want to strike a deal with you."

The Mysterious Merchant replied, "You have made a choice?"

Zhang Mu shook his head, replying: "Obviously you know that we cannot afford your goods at the moment."

The Mysterious Merchant laughed, "Oh? Then what kind of a deal do you want?"

Zhang Mu replied, "Lend me 50 gold coins, and within 2 hours, I will return you twice the amount."

"Within the many years that I have wandered the continent, this is the first time someone has tried to borrow money from me."

Zhang Mu unhurriedly spoke, "You are a businessman. In regards to

your interests, this deal will be extremely lucrative."

"An interesting person." The Mysterious Merchant eyed Zhang Mu from head to toe. "Although my principles don't permit it, you seem to be different from the masses, so I will make this one exception. However, I require a change in the conditions. I will lend you 50 gold coins, and after 2 hours, you will return 200 gold coins."

[Prompt: Debt quest triggered, quest difficulty rank F, do you accept the quest?]

"I accept!"

Quest: [The Debt].

Nature: Miscellaneous tasks.

Difficulty: F rank.

Quest contest: Return 200 gold coins to the Mysterious Merchant in 120 minutes.

Completion reward: +20 goodwill with the Mysterious Merchant.

Failure penalty: permanent negative goodwill with the Mysterious

Merchant, permanent denial of access to a skill.

Zhang Mu received 50 gold coins, and sold the Dog-man machete for another 15 gold coins for a total of 69 gold coins.

Spent 10 gold coins to buy a copy of the [Rank F Monster Dictionary].

Spent 50 gold coins to buy a [Post (six hours)].

Zhang Mu focused all of his energy and found a smaller version of himself within his consciousness. His attributes and character status also appeared next to the miniature Zhang Mu, with several options next to it: [Backpack] [Quests], [Guild], [Party] and [Forum]. Upon entering the forum, one would be greeted with blank emptiness, without anything there.

In the forum, Zhang Mu used the post that he had bought from the Mysterious Merchant.

Zhang Mu pondered for a moment, and then immediately wrote in the post:

“Regardless of whether you are a wealthy high and mighty government official, or a brilliant highly anticipated celebrity, from the moment this game started, all of this no longer means anything! Therefore, abandon your past glories and sins, and set aside your former pride and inferiorities! From this moment onwards, all beings stand on the same

starting line. Only the strong will have the right to survive, while the weak will be subject to a fate of slavery and extinction. Life or death, strong or weak, it lies in your hands... Please firmly believe, this is truly the end of the world as we know it, but it is definitely not the end of mankind.

In addition, I want to inform everyone of one unfortunate thing, we are already no longer on our home planet. It is absurd, but these are the facts. Beyond the edges of Jiang City lies a forest. Correct, we are in a completely different world. We are isolated. There will be no rescue. There will be no military, nor will there be any government. Jiang City is considered the most inferior region on this map, and the monsters within, range from level 1 to 3. In all honesty, as long as you are able to conquer your fears and wisely use your intelligence, these lower grade monsters will not be invincible.

Of course, what if you decide to hide in a place with adequate food? It is impossible, as the system the will soon issue mandatory tasks, and those who fail to accomplish those tasks, will be exterminated by the system."

"This is the information for monsters with levels lower than 10, and included is the monster's habits and weaknesses, attribute information, skills and other information. It is information that is extremely crucial for survival, please be sure to pay attention!"

"Reading the information below will cost 1 gold as a fee."

Zhang Mu copied the information from the Monster Dictionary into the post, setting it up to require a fee to read, costing each person 1 gold coin. The Monster Dictionary described in detail monsters below level 10, the total number of monsters reaching an astounding figure, exceeding

1000 species.

Jiang City had a population of approximately four million people, the majority of which would have died within the first 24 hours of the Heavenly Calamity. About one person out of ten people would survive, and of these survivors, one out of five people would obtain player qualifications within the first 12 hours. In other words, within 12 hours there would be about 80,000 people that would be qualified as players.

This piece of information would be extremely important, and would definitely rewrite the course of history.

According to Zhang Mu's memories, the reason for humanity's final downfall was a result of the death toll being extremely high in the early stages followed by in-fighting and unrest between different ethnic groups, forcing parties to group up to fight against each other and preventing humans from concentrating their forces. This eventually led to humanity's extinction.

Since it was a new start, the same mistakes could not be repeated, and the knowledge already possessed could be exploited for maximum benefit. However, this was not a one man game, and for Zhang Mu, it was necessary to ensure that as many people as possible could survive, thus increasing the overall humanity faction's collective strength.

Important information in regards to all monsters in the region can be considered vital to the survival of people in the earlier days. In addition, the announcement helped Zhang Mu establish a solid reputation, making him a celebrity in the whole area of the map.

Zhang Mu used Mu Tou as an ID in his post on the forum.

"Prompt: Post successfully established, it will expire after six hours!"

"Prompt: First poster in this map, awarded 300 prestige points!"

"Prompt: First post has been delivered, the whole map will be notified!"

Upon hearing the system announcement, Fatty displayed a surprised expression. "There is even a forum function, this post by Mu Tou should be your doing, right boss?"

Zhang Mu quietly sat down, the monsters remained outside roaring repeatedly. However, as long as one was within 100m of the Mysterious Merchant, none of the monsters could get any closer. Before the Mysterious Merchant left, the two men would remain unscathed. In regards to the announcement by the system, it was the first time players knew about this system, therefore the views quickly passed 1000, and the head count of players within the city evidently surpassed the expected number by quite a bit.

After two minutes, the first paying customer appeared, and 1 gold coin was earned.

After five minutes time, the number of paying customers increased explosively, and revenue instantly reached 160.

After 10 minutes, the number of paying customers gradually stabilised, reaching 180.

After 30 minutes from the start, it broke through 200 people.

Zhang Mu shook his fist happily, the outcome had been very good, and his income had been much faster than expect. He passed 200 gold coins to the Mysterious Merchant.

“Mission Complete!”

“Goodwill with the Mysterious Merchant increased by 20 points, causing favorability to rise by 20 points. Relationship changed: Neutral -> Normal.”

From this point onwards, every gold coin earned would count as Zhang Mu's personal wealth.

The amount paid by the viewers gradually increased as the amount of players in the region increased. As a result of the number of players winning gold coins from killing monsters, this increased the rate of growth.

One hour, 150 gold coins.

Two hours, 400 gold coins.

Three hours, 590 gold coins

Four hours, 950 gold coins.

After a whole five hours passed, 1200 gold coins had accumulated in his backpack.

Even if it were one or two months later, 1200 would still be an extremely exorbitant sum. When taking into account the 200 initial earnings, 1400 people had paid to read the post. As people do not usually act alone, in a group of people only one person needed to pay and then share the information with the rest, at least skipping out on paying five times.

The Mysterious Merchant was about 20 minutes away from leaving,

[Hand-drawn Area Map], 100 gold coins!

[F rank skill book: Assassinate], 300 gold coins!

[F rank skill book: Quick Step], 200 gold coins!]

First, the most important skills books and maps were bought, for a total of 500 gold coins.

[Level 1 skill upgrade scroll]. 400 gold coins!

The skill upgrade scroll was able to upgrade skills. This was an extremely important item and was priced at 500 gold coins.

There were a lot of good items in the shop, unfortunately the remaining browsing time was too limited, and he had no way of collecting more

gold coins. Therefore, he could only buy the most useful items. After buying the skill books, skill scrolls, and maps, Zhang Mu also bought the remaining post in the store. He then used the same technique as before to earn a large sum of gold coins.

Zhang Mu used the last 203 gold coins on equipment.

[Fine iron dagger] (Ordinary grade Black Iron weapon, Attack +8, Speed +1, Durability: 20/20. Price, 80 gold coins.

[Fine two handed-axe] (Ordinary grade Black Iron weapon] Attack +14, 10% reduction in wielder's speed, Durability: 20/20. Price, 110 gold coins.

Although the two weapons were both Black Iron grade equipment, an ordinary Black Iron item was still much better than an inferior quality Black Iron item. Zhang Mu decided to equip the dagger, while the two-handed axe was passed to Fatty.

Volume 1: Chapter 6 – Out of Danger

The fine iron dagger was 76 centimeters long, its blade was very sharp, faintly gleaming in the light. The fine two handed iron axe was more than 1.2 meters long. Its body was made completely of a pitch black metal, and the axe blades themselves were extremely thick and heavy. At this moment, the two already had a huge advantage over other players!

Fatty brandished his axe, the resulting wind blew dust off the ground uncontrollably. Fatty revealed an ecstatic expression. "Good, such a fine axe. I like it!".

Many monsters were beginning to wander around outside the iron gate, waiting for the Mysterious Merchant to leave before beginning their assault.

Zhang Mu, observing the surroundings, passed a can of gasoline to Fatty and pointed to a few buses. He gave his orders, "You see that car, the one next to it and the one over there along with that other group of cars? Quickly go and open up their gas tanks and splash gasoline over them."

Fatty followed his instructions. Meanwhile, Zhang Mu used the opportunity to examine his recently acquired skill book.

[Assassination, Level 1], F+ ranked skill, highest level: 3, increases attack speed by 50% when facing a specified target. Can be used in synergy with other skills. Mana cost 2 points, cooldown time of 10 seconds.

[Quick Step, Level 1], F ranked skill, highest level: 3, increases movement speed by 25% to charge forward up to 100 meters. Can be used with other skills. Mana cost 2 points, cooldown time of 10 seconds.

Class F was the lowest rank of skills, and most of them would be gradually phased out in a couple of months. However, these two skills did not have fixed values but, instead, made an impact based on percentage and could be used with other skills. Therefore, they would still be useful in the future. Although they might not directly enhance damage output, one could increase attack and the other could increase movement speed, indirectly enhancing overall damage output.

Zhang Mu proceeded to use the skill upgrade scroll, raising the level 1 God's Blessing to level 2.

God's Blessing [LV2]: A rank skill, maximum level: 9, consumes 45% of user's mana to grant 1.5 seconds of invincibility, complete the cooldown time on any skills under rank S, and increases user's attributes by 30% for 140 seconds. Cooldown time: 57 minutes.

The skill level up increased the invincibility duration by 0.5 seconds, reduced the consumption of mana, improved the duration of the attribute buff by 20 seconds, increased the effect by 5%, and reduced the cooldown by 3 minutes.

The skill had amazing growth potential. One could only imagine how powerful it would be when raised to its max level of 9.

Fatty poured the gas before coming back, having exhausted the two barrels of gasoline that Zhang Mu had prepared.

"Time is up, I should be leaving now." The Mysterious Merchant smiled and said, "I hope to be able to do business with warriors that have high potential, but sometimes, luck is also important. Therefore, if you are able to encounter me again within thirty days, I will give you a small gift."

Random quest, [Lucky Reunion] triggered!

"Quest Content: Encounter the Mysterious Merchant again within 30 days.."

"Successful Completion award: +40 goodwill with the Mysterious Merchant, and a mysterious reward."

"Failure Penalty: -20 goodwill with the Mysterious Merchant."

As the Merchant spoke his last words, his silhouette slowly faded into the night. Outside the bus station, the monsters emitted terrifying roars.

Fatty was scared to the point of trembling. "Boss, this is way too creepy!"

Zhang Mu calmly took out a Zippo lighter, "Once the Mysterious Merchant departs, the monster will jointly attack us."

"Then what should we do?"

"We will kill our way out out."

Fatty was almost stupefied, he nervously stammered, "B-b-boss, you aren't messing with me right? Can the two of us k-kill our way out?"

"Most of the monsters have entered the parking lot. I will ignite the gasoline on the ground to blow up those vehicles. A dozen buses exploding will emit a significant amount of explosive power, and it will definitely wound or kill a large portion of them. First, go and hide in the waiting room to avoid any accidental injuries from the explosion. Come out only after the first wave of explosions. We will use the carnage of the explosions to kill our way out. Remember, do not dawdle. The explosions will attract monsters that are further away. We have to breakthrough the monsters before the arrival of those other monsters. We must move extremely quickly. When slashing through the monsters, do it fast. Do not expect me to stop and rescue you. "

"Aren't you scared of the buses' explosions ?"

"I have a skill which grants the effect of temporary invincibility, the explosion will not be able to kill me." Zhang Mu popped open the lighter with a "Pa" sound, the gentle flame reflected in his deep dark eyes, "I want to ignite the flames, go in."

The Mysterious Merchant had already become completely transparent, and after another two or three seconds, he disappeared completely.

Fatty stumbled, "Wait, don't set it alight yet!"

The ground was coated in gasoline, the surrounding buses fuel tanks were fully opened. Their fuel tanks were also splashed with gasoline. As

soon as Zhang Mu ignited the gasoline on the ground, the flame would spread rapidly to the surrounding cars, causing them to blow up and create a massive explosion!

Roughly 6 or 7 seconds later.

"Boom!"

Suddenly, from the bus station, there came an earth shattering roar!

Zhang Mu carried his dagger with him as he escaped the raging fires of the explosion by vaulting from the walls of the bus station. Fatty exited behind him, his axe in hand. The two of them had their faces covered in soot, their hair lightly scorched. They had just climbed over the wall when they came face to face with three goblins.

The goblins issued frog-like croaking sounds, and ran towards the two men.

Quick Step!

Zhang Mu launched the new skill. Like stepping on an invisible skateboard, his feet moved at an alarming speed. He appeared next to a goblin on the right, his right hand flashing out in a dull grey light. The goblin had just raised his stick when his neck was slashed open. Its green blood ejected several meters high, its health abruptly dropping to 25%. Zhang Mu made a backhanded strike with his knife, killing it.

Another Goblin rushed in from the side.

Assassination!

Zhang Mu struck as fast as lightning, his blade a blur as it pierced the goblin's heart. With the current 16-point attack and a critical hit, the damage applied was very impressive, causing the goblin's life to deplete immediately. Zhang Mu waved his arm, the dagger's blade sliding across the goblin's neck as its body fell lifelessly to the ground.

"Brutal collision!"

Fatty's body discharged a red light that wrapped around his body like a burning flame. His legs strained under the immense power generated, cracks forming with each step he took as he crashed into the goblins like a runaway locomotive. In the face of such a brutal assault, how could the goblins small physiques handle it? They flew away like a kite with its strings cut, their bodies broken, they fell heavily to the ground ten meters away, struggling briefly before they stopped breathing.

Ten meters of ground was covered in cracks, a trace of the prior red energy still lingering in the air. Fatty had shocked himself, stunned on the spot.

Zhang Mu cried, "Damnable Fatty, what are you looking at?! Hurry and go!"

Fatty hurried to keep up with Zhang Mu, feeling his shock slowly wear down before something clicked in his mind. For the first time, he felt like the occurrence of this disaster, perhaps might not entirely be a bad thing!

The sound of the buses exploding was too loud, and it quickly attracted all the monsters in the surrounding area. Therefore, it was unfeasible to continue running around blindly because no matter which way they went, they would only find hordes of monsters lying in wait. Thus they could only find a sufficiently safe place to hide.

The two dashed into a small alley, not far from a medium-sized hotel which covered a small area and was built three stories high.

Zhang Mu shouted, "We will go to that building to hide!"

They quickly ran towards the small hotel. Zhang Mu's eyes fell on a tree in front of the hotel, and quickly like a monkey, he climbed the tree branches in two, three steps. Jumping three meters each time, he clung onto the windowsill of a room on the third floor, smashed it open with a backward swipe of his dagger, and prepared to dive into the room.

From below came Fatty's desperate shout, "Boss, boss, wait! help me! Ah my butt!"

Zhang Mu glanced backwards to see Fatty hanging onto one of the tree branches. The tree branch bent dangerously under his weight as he struggled to climb with an axe in one hand. Coincidentally, there was a short gnome wielding a crossbow, releasing a bolt with a "whoosh" sound. The bolt's sharp head embedded itself in Fatty's nice plump ass.

"Truly stupid! Keep the axe in your backpack!"

Fatty stored the axe in his backpack. One would wonder if it was the lack of the burden of the heavy axe or the bolt buried in his ass which inspired Fatty's potential as he, like a big fat worm, quickly slithered up the tree. Learning from Zhang Mu, he jumped towards the window sill. His 100 kilograms of meat was just like an artillery shell, heavily falling on the window.

"Get in!"

Zhang Mu supported Fatty, pushing him in first. Fatty rolled onto the floor, landing on a few sharp pieces of shattered glass and causing him to shriek in pain. Zhang Mu was about to follow him and jump in when he realised that three Cat-men had followed them up, one of them jumping directly to the tree and taking the lead by pouncing across.

Zhang Mu used Assassination, striking as quick as lightning. His blade was as slippery as a snake as it chopped towards the Cat-man's neck, cutting its neck open and forcing it to desperately fall off the ledge in a mist of its own blood.

At that moment, another Cat-man had also jumped onto the wall and lunged over from the left, its speed too fast for Zhang Mu to dodge or block. Its two claws left deep wounds in his back as it bit towards Zhang Mu's neck. Zhang Mu hurriedly turned his body, narrowly avoiding the crucial attack and causing the Cat-man to clamp onto his shoulder. Its canines embedded itself all the way down to the shoulder bone, leaving his whole arm numb.

Just in the nick of time.

Zhang Mu shot out the dagger from his right hand; it rotated a few rounds in the air before landing in his left hand which was plunged into the Cat-man's eye. Before he had pulled out the dagger, there was a shrill "Meow -!" The third Cat-man appeared, jumping down from the roof and lunging towards Zhang Mu like a giant dark bird.

"Ah -!" Fatty roared from within the room, his chubby, blood-coated face was twisted and grim. His heavy axe chopped just above Zhang Mu's head, snapping the thick stainless steel window sill with incredible force as the blades heavily slammed into the Cat-man's body. This slash tore apart the Cat-man's belly, and they could only watch as the Cat-man plunged downwards wailing and spilling its blood and intestines all over the ground as it fell.

Zhang Mu used his left hand to grab the support ledge and dexterously rolled into the room.

Fatty frantically asked, "Boss, your wound...."

"I'm fine, I still have 42% health left and I am nowhere near dead."

Zhang Mu did not spare a glance towards his bloody wound. He quickly walked inside and blocked the windows with a round table. With Fatty's help, he hurriedly piled a dozen solid wooden chairs blocking off the entrance. In regards to the monsters downstairs, most of them could not climb, and after not seeing the two for a considerable period of time, they quickly lost interest and disappeared.

"Finally safe..." Fatty released a sigh of relief, gingerly feeling his butt before sounding out, "Eh, how come I don't feel anything from my butt?"

"There is a paralyzing toxin." Zhang Mu reached out and pulled the wooden bolt from Fatty's ass, "You're lucky. If it had been a little closer, the chrysanthemum bloom may have been necessary."

Fatty realised that his lower body was gradually losing feeling, and could not help but panic, "Poison arrow!? I won't die, right?"

"The effect will only last for a few minutes." As Zhang Mu threw away the bloody wooden bolt, his ears picked up on some noises transmitting from outside the room, the colour on his face quickly changing. "Be careful, there is something out there!"

The door of the room suddenly burst open as several tall figures rushed into the room.

They were led by a brawny guy with a shaved head who was about thirty or forty years old with an unruly expression on his face, while his companions were also dressed very suspiciously. It was almost short of writing "I am a bad guy" on their faces.

Fatty could not help but relax upon seeing other people.

Several disgruntled youngsters rushed over and kicked at the partially-paralyzed Fatty, forcing him directly onto the floor. Another one also attempted to assault Zhang Mu, but before his fists could reach his body, Zhang Mu had kicked at his knees as quick as lightning, giving him a brutal uppercut before locking his arms behind his back and pressing him down on the ground, taking him down on the spot.

"You better not fucking move!"

The Baldy pulled out a black pistol, its muzzle pointing straight at Zhang Mu.

Volume 1: Chapter 7 – Trouble with murderers

It was a model 64 revolver, normally used by the police force. The bald fellow had most likely acquired it from a policeman in the midst of the disaster. Despite how good Zhang Mu was, he was still only level 2 and was only ten meters away from the bald thug. There was no way the bullet would miss, and this was enough to be a fatal threat to Zhang Mu and his remaining 13 points of life.

The Baldy pointed the gun towards Zhang Mu shouting, "Good skill, kid, but if you move again, I your father will riddle you with holes!"

Fatty fell to the ground shouting, "Look! Clearly, we are not monsters!"

The bald thug said, "You led so many monsters downstairs; are you fucking trying to kill us?!"

Zhang Mu deliberately assumed a very weak expression. With his eyes half-closed, he feebly said, "These monsters can't come up here. If you shoot, it will only attract more distant monsters. Then we will all die."

The bald thug angrily snapped, "Boy, don't even think about fooling with me!"

"Brother Hei!" One of the thugs wrenched the axe away from fatty and passed it to the Baldy, "This axe is a piece of equipment!"

"Fuck your mother! That is mine!" Fatty angrily cried.

"Get lost!"

Baldy used his leg to kick Fatty. His thugs joined in and viciously bashed Fatty, leaving his face covered in his own blood.

"Not bad!" Baldy was extremely satisfied with the two handed axe, and fiercely stared at Zhang Mu, "Do you have any other equipment?"

Zhang Mu had long ago kept his dagger inside his backpack before the hooligans had burst in, so his two hands were empty. He purposely pretended to be fearful and angry, as he yelled, "Rather than joining up to attack the monsters outside, you would rather attack your fellow humans. Are you guys even human!"

"Fucker, you also want to join in to lecture me?!" Baldy viciously shoved him, causing Zhang Mu to "seemingly" fall heavily to the floor. Upon seeing this, the Baldy sneeringly laughed, "Truly a waste of space! Tie them up!"

Fatty's two hands and feet were tied up and dragged away by several thugs. Meanwhile, Zhang Mu briefly pretended to put up a struggle before his hands and legs were tied up. Thereafter, the two of them were brought out of the private room and into another room.

Zhang Mu silently studied his captor's situation. In total, there were about nine thugs; Their leader was the Baldy named Brother Hei, and he had a pistol, while the rest of the thugs held weapons like machetes. The majority of them had killed monsters, acquiring player qualifications and enhancements from choosing jobs. This fighting force wasn't weak.

Zhang Mu's right arm was injured, and his hitpoints had dropped to dangerously low levels. Fatty was even worse with half his body paralyzed. It would be irrational to try to resist right now. They were better off pretending like they weren't a threat. Besides, his dagger was in his backpack, so he could take it out and cut off their restraints at anytime. As long as there was an opportunity to get close to the Baldy, Zhang Mu could quickly attack and kill him off in one strike.

The bald thug was extremely cautious, standing behind the two of them as he forced them into the room at gunpoint. As he was standing in Zhang Mu's blind spot, he had no way of taking action.

The ground of the other room was covered in a pool of blood. A uniformed young man laid in the middle of it, his face distorted and eyes bulging. He was dead long ago. This policeman had been hacked to death by machetes with at least twenty slash wounds on him. The corpse had barely become stiff, with blood still oozing out from it.

Two women and a man were huddled in a corner, their hands and feet tied up, and they were most likely suffering from shock. Their faces were as white as sheets, and they shivered non-stop.

Brother Hei grinned as he laughingly said, "If you guys aren't honest, you will soon end up like him!"

Zhang Mu and Fatty were pushed into the corner to crouch with the other three people.

At this moment a beady-eyed rat faced minion asked, "Brother Hei, how

should we deal with these people?"

Brother Hei coldly laughed, "Just leave them for now. The monsters will be attacking soon. We can use them as a distraction first."

The three people's faces turned a shade whiter. One of the women, dressed like a student with short hair, shouted, "If that big brother policeman didn't come, we would have been eaten to death long ago. Just because he had a gun, you slashed him to death; you really are a beast!"

"A beast huh? Well today, I, your elder, will let you see what a beast really looks like!" Brother Hei did not get angry but laughed instead, his eyes swept across the bodies of the two women, "I haven't had a proper "meal" in several days. Today all of us will have a taste!"

"Hahaha, thank you big boss!"

One of the thugs pointed at a long haired girl beside Zhang Mu, saying, "This woman is really impressive, even more beautiful than some of the celebrities on television while this cow is almost like a grapefruit. Her ass is so round and supple, and she is even a doctor. Boss why don't you choose which one you want."

"Well, let us do as you say, Ha-ha-ha!" Brother Hei laughed . "Go! Remove their pants. Today we will have a nice long time."

The long haired woman's face was blocked by her hair, so her expression could not be seen. From the slight trembling of her body,

however, it was possible to see how fearful she was.

Zhang Mu could see from the corner of his eyes that the woman's hands were tied behind her back, and she had a piece of glass held between her index and middle finger. Because the force used was too large, her delicate white fingers had been cut open as she tried to cut open the rope. Unfortunately, she was too late. Several hooligans walked over and held her as Brother Hei forcefully pulled down her waistband.

At that moment, the sound of shattering glass echoed from one of the nearby rooms, vaguely mixed with the meows of several Cat-men.

Brother Hei's expression changed like a bucket of cold water had been poured on his face, and loudly shouted, "Fuck, monsters are inside already! The two of you guard these two, the rest of you follow me!"

Brother Hei left two thugs to guard the hostages and brought the seven other minions with him out of the room. As the two were distracted, Zhang Mu retrieved his dagger, quickly cutting the rope. The seven fellows had just stepped out of the room, leaving the two men feeling frantic and scared by the abruptness of the events.

Zhang Mu cut open the ropes on his legs and leaped up from the ground!

He was like a cheetah that had been poised to strike, violently swooping towards its prey. The dagger flashed with a breathtaking coldness!

The two thugs turned their heads too late; one of them had his throat violently slashed open, his blood splattered all over his companion's face. The other man had a horrified look on his face, his eyes went wide and before he could yell for help, Zhang Mu pulled out the dagger and turned to attack him.

Assassinate!

The blade moved like a flash of thunder; and a cold light swept past his neck.

"Urgh...."

The man grasped at his neck as he fell backwards. Fresh blood gushed out between his fingers, his carotid artery and vocal cords had been severed, leaving him unable to shout for help. Zhang Mu strode over in a flash, rapidly stabbing three times, piercing in, pulling out and piercing in again... The thug's life quickly dropped to zero and he fell to the ground as his breath gradually subsided.

Zhang Mu's actions were extremely fast and ruthless. The whole process took two seconds, killing the two men in the blink of an eye, his actions were ten times more ruthless than a fierce executioner.

Fatty, who had been beaten half-dead, wanted to shout excitedly.

Zhang Mu shot him a glare.

Fatty understood and hurriedly shut his mouth.

Zhang Mu walked over and quickly cut open the ropes of the captives.

There were three people. One was a short haired student who looked as if she was ten years old, she had a short body with extremely fine facial features; she looked extremely adorable. There was also a woman who looked about 24 years old, her long black hair covering her face, making it hard to see it, but her skin was extremely white and tender. Her chest was extremely voluptuous, and her body was slender and lithe with a firm, round bottom that streamlined out her graceful plump figure. There was also a dark brown skinned 30 year old man who was around 1.9 meters tall and built extremely sturdily, his face showing an honest and simple expression, portraying a humble middle-aged man.

The adorable student trembled as she spoke, "You killed them..."

The three people had a fearful light in their eyes.

Zhang Mu's image could only attract reverence from others, as small and large wounds crisscrossed over his body, blood coating his body, his hair disheveled and clothes charred with burn marks, his face covered in dirt and blood. His sudden action of leaping and killing the two men in the blink of an eye was even more terrifying to other people than his current look.

"Good riddance!" Fatty gleefully spoke, "Those motherfuckers deserved to die!"

"They will be back very soon." Zhang Mu asked the three, "Who has not yet obtained an initial skill?"

The tall, plump young woman whispered, "I haven't."

Her voice was extremely alluring and extremely soothing to the ears.

Zhang Mu noticed that the woman's fingers were dripping blood and her fists were tightly clenched. Under these circumstances, for an individual to exhibit no panic but instead strive to survive, he felt that this woman was definitely not simple.

"What is your name?"

"Leng Yun"

"That small piece of glass won't be able to hurt anybody, you might as well get rid of it."

Leng Yun took a step back, she seemed a little nervous, but did not discard the piece of glass.

Zhang Mu felt his admiration towards this woman increase, she seemed a lot more reliable than Fatty, and he immediately took out a blue ball of light from his backpack and handed it to her. "Luckily I have a skill sphere. There is no point in keeping it, so I will pass it to you."

Leng Yun studied him for a while, then with eyes glistening, she whispered, "Thank you."

[Healing Hand, Level 1], D ranked skill, maximum level 5, consumes 1 mana per second and the target recovers 2 health points per second, maximum distance 0.5 meters, no cooldown.

[Leng Yun], elemental mage, level 1, 8 health points (80%), 30 mana (100%), 4 strength, 4 vitality, 4 agility, 11 spirit.

Zhang Mu said, "This is a pretty good healing spell."

Leng Yun seemed to have become a lot less cautious towards Zhang Mu, "He has a gun on him, are you sure you can deal with them?"

Zhang Mu nodded his head as he spoke, "Just because they have a gun, doesn't mean they are invincible."

Leng Yun walked forward, white light emerging from her palm shimmering and glistening as it flew through the air in patches of white before scattering on Zhang Mu's body. His wounds visibly sealed as his health points quickly recovered, and within 6 to 7 seconds, Zhang Mu's body was woundless, his health back to 100%.

Fatty's eyes went wide, "This skill is really good! Little lady can you heal me too?"

Zhang Mu nodded his head as he spoke, "I'll need a helping hand, heal him too."

Leng Yun used about eight seconds to fully recover Fatty and the originally beaten half-dead Fatty immediately revitalized, like a living

dragon or a fierce tiger. [Healing Hands] was a very practical skill, especially since there were no potions in the early days of the calamity. Therefore, Leng Yun, who had learnt this skill, was essentially priceless.

Outside, the sound of battle eventually died down. The Cat-men outside had been dealt with, so Brother Hei was returning with his men.

Zhang Mu gestured with his hands, "The three of you go and hide properly."

After the three people had hidden behind a desk, Zhang Mu stood at the side of the door while Fatty stood in front of the door, waiting for the footsteps to get closer.

Brother Hei's gasping voice rang out from outside, "Damn it, such bad luck, we won't be able to stay here for long. After tonight, we will move away!"

"I'm sure everyone is bubbling with anticipation, so tonight we must use those two ladies to extinguish that fire."

"Well said."

Brother Hei spoke as he pushed opened the door and because the lighting was extremely poor, he was unable to see the situation clearly, he could only see the emitted energy that coated Fatty's body. The light illuminated the entire room revealing Fatty, poised in a charging position and ready to strike.

"Fuck!"

As Brother Hei raised the pistol to shoot, the edge of a dagger flicked from the left, slicing through his right arm and causing him to scream in pain.

"Brutal Charge!"

Fatty erupted with a roar, his feet stomped hard as his body was wrapped in an oppressive red energy. With the shocking force of a runaway locomotive, he bulldozed through the mass of people. It was as if an explosion had occurred, the steel frame of the door was ripped open, Brother Hei was struck with the full force of the blow and was sent flying five or six meters. After crashing into the wall with a strong impact, he slid off the wall lifelessly, all of the bones in his body broken.

Volume 1: Chapter 8 – Compulsory Quest

Brutal Charge was a D+ ranked attack skill and the top players currently did not exceed level 2, therefore, if they were to take a direct hit, they would be severely wounded or killed.

Leng Yun and the others were completely shocked, was this magnitude of destructive power even possible for a human?

Zhang Mu picked up the pistol and unloaded the magazine to check it and there were only five bullets left.

Fatty shouted, "Boss, there are still several people breathing!"

Several of the thugs had avoided death by the collision, but they had been severely wounded, with their bones fractured, vomiting blood. They laid on the ground struggling desperately as they watched Zhang Mu silently walk over, whereupon they immediately struggled to kneel down and beg for mercy.

"We know we were wrong, you guys are powerful and merciful, spare us."

"Don't kill me! I don't want to die!"

"We only did all this because we were forced by Heige!"

"....."

Zhang Mu did not heed their pleas for mercy, methodically ending their lives.

"They did not have the strength to resist.", the tall middle aged honest looking man could not resist speaking up. "It isn't right to kill them all off, they were just underlings."

Zhang Mu indifferently replied, "The disaster has just happened and they have already started demonstrating such malicious actions, this reflects that their inherent nature is evil and they will continue to do evil after they recover and will even maintain a grudge against us. There is no guarantee that they will not come back for revenge. The world has already changed, no matter what your final decision is, you should absolutely not leave any risks."

These people had been ordinary law abiding citizens yesterday, each performed work according to their station in society, it was completely unimaginable to even think of committing murder. No one was born a killer, everyone needed an ideological transformation. This was a lawless time where human life was insignificant, and the viciousness of human nature would be revealed as people would kill without reason. If you don't kill people, people would kill you. In such troubled times, compassion was a burden and sympathy a sin.

All the bodies were disposed of.

Fatty introduced the two of them, "We might as well get to know each

other. This brilliant and courageous hero is Boss Zhang Mu, nicknamed Mu Tou. You guys saw the post in the forum right? Correct, that was published by my amazing boss!"

The few people revealed shocked expressions. The short haired girl cried out in surprise, "So you were the publisher of that post, how formidable! How did you discover so much information on the various powerful monsters?"

Fatty triumphantly huffed, "That small bit of informations counts for ass! If it weren't for boss, I would have lost my life a long time ago. In the future, interacting with boss will provide you with no small benefits!"

"Can you spout less crap?" Zhang Mu threw over the monster dictionary, "I am a fourth year Chinese student at the River City University."

The short haired girl was surprised, "I am also a River City University Chinese student. I am Qin Min, but I am only a first year. If I remember correctly, you are the well known author, Zhang Mu Senior!"

Leng Yun was flipping through the monster manual, her face covered in unspoken surprise, "You are the horror suspense writer from the Chinese Department? I am a researcher from the River City University Medical Institute currently working at the affiliated hospital. My roommates and I have read your work!"

Zhang Mu had been a writer for the past five years and could be considered a minor celebrity within River City University. No one would have been able to imagine the very talented young student as the

current cold blooded killer.

Fatty cried out in exaggeration, "Boss is a suspense novel writer? No wonder your IQ is higher than the average person! In the future, you will definitely be a leader who will lead others to conquer the North, South, East and West, unifying the city!"

Zhang Mu could not be bothered with Fatty and asked the middle-aged man, "What is your name?"

The honest-looking middle aged man replied, "I am called Sun Bing, I was a chef."

Zhang Mu had the demeanor of a student and did not fit the image of a heartless murderer, therefore, the caution that the group held towards him slightly lessened.

"Fatty, go look for something to eat."

"Yes, earlier I was already feeling extremely hungry."

Zhang Mu sat down and inquired about the skills of the two other people.

Qin Mei had chosen the summoner class, while Sun Bing had chosen the knight class.

The summoner class was weak in the early stages because summoners

had extremely low attributes. Their skill books were extremely rare and hard to find in the early stages and even if the enemy was fully equipped from head to toe, once a summoner learned several powerful summoning skills, they would become extremely difficult to take down.

Knights had defense second only to that of shieldbearers and had higher offensive capability. They also possessed several buffs and restoration skills, making them an extremely popular class.

Zhang Mu also asked, "What are your starting skills?"

Qin Min's skill: [Communicate, Level 1], F ranked skill, maximum level: 3. Able to communicate with smaller organisms, consumes mana based on target, and grants the ability to control small animals, up to a maximum of one. Skill has no cooldown.

Sun Bing's Skill: [Taunt, Level 1], F+ ranked skill, maximum level: 3. Able to attract monster's hostility towards oneself, increasing monster's attack by 5%, and reducing defence by 10%. Maximum skill duration 5 seconds, consumes 5 mana points. Skill has 30 seconds cooldown.

These two people did not obtain outstanding skills. Fortunately the skills that they did obtain were the most practical within the F rank.

[Communicate] was originally the skill used by hunters for reconnaissance purposes, it allowed the use of small mammals and birds to ascertain the distribution of nearby terrain and monsters.

[Taunt] was a skill meant for the shieldbearers and knights to enrage

monsters to attract their aggression, this skill was crucial in any team battle.

There was reconnaissance, recovery, monser attraction and damage output.

This fulfilled all the necessary requirements of a basic combat team!

Zhang Mu grinned in satisfaction, "Not bad!"

"Boss, I've found stuff to eat!" Fatty had returned. Because it was a hotel, food was not hard to find. The food was mainly comprised of mostly fresh vegetables and chilled meat in addition to a large number of alcoholic drinks and for these semi-starved people, who would complain? As long as they could eat, it was fine!

Fatty consumed two whole roasted ducks, several plates of peanuts, and downed three bottles of beer before he finally had enough. He also dug out from his bag a packaged bag while he licked his lips, drawing out several cigarettes to pass to Zhang Mu and Sun Bing. "Boss, have a smoke!"

"I don't smoke." Zhang Mu rejected his offer, "I noticed earlier that the restroom had clean water. Everyone should use this opportunity to freshen up."

The group had been thoroughly convinced by Zhang Mu's cool-headedness and decisive actions especially since he was the first person to post on the forums. Consequently, they were very respectful towards

him. Leng Yun and Qin Min were females, while Sun Bing was a humble cook. Fatty was especially devoted and loyal to Zhang Mu as a result of being saved multiple times, therefore, everyone regarded him as the leader.

Zhang Mu washed off the blood and soot covering his face, using a towel to scrub his body.

On close inspection of the backpack, it was concluded that it could only store items with game attributes and it was unable to store items without attributes and had five grids of space to store items and a separate slot to store gold. At this moment, Zhang Mu had collected 523 gold coins, a huge sum of money in the early stages.

After a six hour lapse, the forum post was automatically deleted, the information had yielded a tremendous return in addition to granting aid to many people. Secondarily, it made him a celebrity among players.

Zhang Mu wiped his face dry, walking out from the restroom. Leng Yun had just come out from the ladies restroom. Coincidentally, they came face to face.

The two people stared blankly at each other.

They could see astonishment reflected in each other's eyes.

Leng Yun's long hair was tied up, revealing an attractive face with smooth skin, her facial features were as delicate as snow, truly exquisite with a pair of bright calculating eyes that projected a profoundly deep

impression on anyone that met her gaze. Approximately 1.68 meters tall, her slender and plump frame exuded an aura of warmth and gentleness, like a flowing river in spring. Meticulous observation revealed that beneath her elegance and unapproachable demeanor, she possessed the temperament of a successful career woman, she was not one to be overlooked or incensed.

The two contradicting temperaments melded together to portray a visage of delicate beauty and a strong unyielding heart, she indeed was an unsurpassed beauty.

"I suddenly remembered." Zhang Mu pondered for a moment, "Leng Yun is the River City University's famous ice beauty, even in different campuses I have heard a lot of rumors about you."

Unlike the cold indifference that the name implied, Leng Yun was actually very gentle and considerate. None of the countless suitors pursuing her had ever gained her favor, therefore, she was crowned the title of 'ice beauty' because her heart was like an unmeltable block of ice. Leng Yun was the flower of the medical school, while Sun Lin was the flower of the Chinese department. She was also a quite well-known beauty but in comparison to Leng Yun, regardless of whether it was in terms of looks, stature or temperament, they all seemed to be inferior to her.

"That is just meaningless gossip exaggerated beyond proportions. Don't believe it."

Leng Yun sized up Zhang Mu, his height was not considered tall at just 1.78m, with extremely handsome facial features, he gave off the impression of being the boy next door and it allowed people to feel an

intimate sense of comfort, but it made him indistinguishable in a crowd. One would not equate this seemingly sentimental young man with that of a cold blooded warrior who would kill without a second thought.

As the two were not very familiar with one another, they were both considerably quiet. They did not know what to say, making the atmosphere slightly awkward. Just at this moment, the emotionless voice of the system sounded in their ears.

<Prompt: system initiated quest! Compulsory quest has been loaded, players please pay attention!>

Quest name: [Dawn Camp].

Difficulty: F+ difficulty level.

Properties: Compulsory Quest

Content: Following the map, arrive at Dawn Camp in twenty days.

Success reward: 50 gold coins, a random F grade drop.

Failure penalty: Death!

Leng Yun's face changed when she saw the quest, "This quest..."

She remembered what Zhang Mu said in the post.

Zhang Mu said, "In this game of survival, life is nowhere near that simple. If you don't follow the instructions of the system, you will only end up being eliminated. I will go find the others, I need to make several announcements."

As Leng Yun stared at Zhang Mu's back, a flash of surprise and bewilderment emerged in her eyes. After reading Zhang Mu's monster dictionary, it only held records of information pertaining to monsters and no other content, so how did Zhang Mu expect the arrival of this compulsory task?

This man was definitely not someone to be underestimated!

The five people gathered together.

Upon meeting, Qin Min asked, "Zhang Mu senior, what is this quest about?"

Qin Min had just finished cleaning herself and while she was nowhere near as stunning as Leng Yun, she had fair skin and extremely attractive facial features. If one were to base her looks on a standardized ranking system of 100, she would have had a score of at least 60, basically the qualification to be a class beauty.

Zhang Mu spoke, "The quest instructions are extremely detailed, we must move quickly to Dawn Camp. If you open the map, you will be able to see the location of Dawn Camp."

The quest had provided a map. On the River City map, only a very small part was surrounded by forest, the rest was covered in grey fog, making it impossible to see the surrounding terrain, but there was a dim light in the dark region to the west, which was estimated to be the location of the Dawn Camp. As the five people were located in the western suburb, they did not have to trek across the city because Dawn Camp was located further to the west. They only needed to walk towards the camp, so they had an advantage that other people did not.

Leng Yun frowned as she spoke, "The map provided by the quest is too vague, it only provides us with a general direction."

Zhang Mu took out a huge spool of map from his backpack, laid it out on the floor, and shined a torch on it. "This is a map that I acquired from the Mysterious Merchant at a very high price."

This map was extremely detailed, providing information on the terrain and it also displayed the unrevealed areas as well as the distribution of monsters.

Qin Min looked at the map. River City just made up a small part of the entire surface. "The bloody forest, Goblin mountain fortress, Gnoll Camp, Cat-men burrows... such strange names!"

Zhang Mu spoke as he pointed to the map, "We must pass through the bloody forest. From the information on the map, the monsters range from

level 1 -10. This level variation is very big, so it will be quite dangerous. We don't have to rush to enter the forest, so we will first use the next two days to raise our levels to 4 as leaving then, won't be too late."

The monsters in River City ranged between level 1 – 3, for players whose levels reached level 4, the experience gained would fall sharply, taking them even longer to level up. The earlier one entered the camp, the sooner one could grasp early stage advantages, especially Zhang Mu who had a large amount of valuable information. He did not want to waste time in the lower level monster zones.

Volume 1: Chapter 9 – Wandering Gnome Warlock

Xihu Park was located in the western suburb of Jiang City and was mostly constituted of an artificial lake. As the breeze blew over the lake, the surface of the lake glittered. On the river banks, jade green grass fluttered in the wind, as willow trees whistled. This was originally an extremely beautiful sight but unfortunately, the air was permeated with the thick, bloody smell of decay, ruining the atmosphere.

Five people gingerly walked into a delicately crafted red pavilion, their backs facing towards the man-made lake, facing a small square about 100 meters away. The concrete floor was covered in a dark layer of red, a coagulation of human blood, where several bodies had been gnawed to pieces, abandoned in the middle of the square and surrounded by a swarm of flies while several goblins randomly wandered about.

Then, a sparrow flew into the pavilion, landing in Qin Min's palms.

Zhang Mu asked inquired, "What is the situation?"

Qin Min communicated with the sparrow momentarily, replying, "There's no apparent danger. In front, there are twelve goblins with five on the square and four on the outside. Three of them are in the woods to the left."

Zhang Mu nodded his head in satisfaction, "This will be easy to handle. After killing this lot of monsters, everyone should be able to level up."

Sun Bing laughed as he spoke, "To reach level 4 in two days time, this

leveling speed is pretty fast."

Fatty immediately butted in, "This is all a result of following boss., otherwise,, we would be extremely cautious. How could we dare to run all over the place to kill monsters?"

Sun Bing laughed honestly as he smiled, "You're right!"

Qin Min could not resist, and snapped, "You giant fatty, can you kiss less ass?"

Leng Yun covered her mouth as she giggled, a sight that could dazzle any male. However, Zhang Mu did not notice, as he was observing the surrounding environment. He raised his right hand gently waving, motioning for the group to jump into action.

The five man team had reached level 3 after killing two days' worth of monsters under Zhang Mu's leadership; this was no small feat. However, the first few stages required less experience. With each rise in level, the experience requirement doubled each time, making leveling up increasingly difficult.

Zhang Mu brought Fatty and Sun Bing with him as they entered the woods, finding the tracks of three goblins. Goblins were not very strong monsters and for close combat fighters like Fatty and Sun Bing, as long as they had better skills, they could match up with one or two each. Zhang Mu's combat and fighting skills were able to match up with even more, up to five or six goblins.

However, in order to let everyone get some practice and adapt to their capabilities and fighting styles, strengthening them, Zhang Mu used the traditional method of attracting the aggression of one monster and pulling them in a circle. Sun Bing would then grasp the right timing to cast Taunt, causing one monster to leave the pack and allowing a few people to attack and kill it together. Only when Sun Bing inadvertently attracted too many monsters would Zhang Mu take action.

After half an hour, the monsters had been killed, and the five people rose in level.

Zhang Mu checked his experience bar and said, "From level 4 to level 5, it requires several times the experience needed to advance from level 3 to level 4. If we keep killing monsters under level 3, the experience gained would be lacking. If we continue to stay in the city to level up, however, it would take at least 5 days to raise another level."

Fatty dismissively said, "Then let's head towards Dawn Camp."

Zhang Mu raised his head, looking up. As it was about 4 in the afternoon, the sky was slowly starting to dim. "No rush, first let's rest for the night and use the extra time to prepare some supplies."

Sun Bing said, "I know that there is a supermarket in front of the park, we can find some food and tools there."

"Then what are we waiting for?" Qin Min was a very bubbly person, immediately saying, "Let's go!"

The five people slowly left the garden. The supermarket that Sun Bing had mentioned was indeed at the entrance. However, it was visible from afar that there were some silhouettes moving in the middle of the road. Zhang Mu realized that it was three gnomes. In Jiang City there were no advanced monsters; gnomes had less health and low defence, but they were a ranged attack species; therefore, it made them relatively harder to deal with.

Leng Yun's eyes flashed in excitement, "Everyone look, there is a chest."

Several eyes followed the direction that her finger was pointing at. Behind the gnomes, there really was a large chest. This chest was constructed purely from glossy black metal, with a featureless square body. It was likely that there was an item stashed in the chest.

Zhang Mu flashed a smile, "That is a black iron treasure chest. We have really good luck."

Qin Min curiously asked, "What is a black iron treasure chest?"

Zhang Mu shrugged his shoulder as he vaguely replied, "This... according to gaming experience, on the field there will sometimes appear treasure chests. Usually there is a surprise inside them."

Black iron treasure chests were chests that would only appear in the areas that were under level 10 difficulty. There would often be black iron equipment within the chest, and if one was lucky, they could obtain extraordinary items. To be able to encounter a chest could also be considered to be an adventure.

Fatty excitedly raised his axe, "Great, let's get going then."

Zhang Mu dragged him back, "When are you going to use your brains?"

"Boss! I don't understand!"

"Did you not realise that one of the gnomes is different from the common ones?"

Only then did Fatty realise that the gnome in the middle was different from ordinary gnomes. It held a wooden rod instead of a short bow, and if you looked closely, you would notice the gnome had a beard, seemingly a lot older than the rest of the gnomes.

[Wandering Gnome Warlock], level 4 Black Iron elite, 100 health, 200 mana, attributes: ??, skills: ??

"One hundred health points? Fuck, it's tank!"

"This is an elite." Zhang Mu paused momentarily before adding, "Its high health is not the problem, but it is a spellcaster and thus, deals out considerable damage. We have no equipment, therefore, we can be easily killed."

Monsters had different rankings: Common level, Elite level, Leader level, Lord level, Earth Spirit level, Heaven Spirit level, Saint Spirit level, and Celestial Spirit level for a total of eight levels. The higher the level of monster, the more scarce its number and its strength increases. Elite

levels could be further divided into four levels: Black Iron, Bronze, Silver and Gold.

Within the ranks of elites, this was the weakest Black Iron elite, but when opposing a bunch of low-level players without skills and equipment, it was simply invincible. Not to mention the fact that it was a highly offensive magic caster.

"Then how should we fight it?"

Leng Yun observed Zhang Mu's calm countenance and did not know why she felt a sense of budding confidence. Leng Yun had the visage of a delicate tender beauty, but she had experienced a rough childhood when she was small, causing her to develop a highly competitive personality. There had never been a man that made her feel such a sense of security, Zhang Mu perhaps being the only exception.

Zhang Mu pondered briefly before speaking, "I checked the stats for the Gnome Warlock before, they have two skills, the first is a flame missile, which moves extremely fast and inflicts high damage and apart from Uncle Sun Bing who will be able to endure one blow, the rest of us will be instantly killed by it. The second skill is a magic shield, its speed is slower, but it constructs a defensive shield with a value of approximately 25 health points, effectively giving the gnome 25 extra health points."

Leng Yun frowned, "So how should we fight it?"

"With your current fighting ability, in all likelihood you will end up dead. So stay here for now, and let me handle it this time."

"Will you be able to handle it yourself? That is an elite you know!"

"Elite? It's only an elite, that's all!"

Zhang Mu was the backbone of the team. In the case anything happened, the difficulty level for the others would shoot up drastically

Leng Yun was about to speak, but then she saw his disdainful expression. She couldn't help being momentarily stunned. By that time, Zhang Mu had already pulled out the pistol, quickly creeping forward.

Gunshots would be too loud, causing the weapon to be useless in the Bloody Jungle.

This sort of attributeless weapon did not grant experience on kills, so there was no point in keeping it. It would be put to better use here. When there was about less than 100 meters between them, Zhang Mu suddenly accelerated and used the Quick Step skill. Both feet slid across the top of the ground as if he had stepped on an invisible skateboard. He quickly charged towards the gnome.

"Gu Gu! Gu Gu!"

The gnome issued a harsh cry upon noticing Zhang Mu. The two ordinary gnomes stood at the side nocking arrows. The Gnome Warlock began casting, a blue glow emerged from his rod and gradually turning into a shield. The caster type monsters which had the shield skill would always deploy it as soon as a fight would start. The distance between combatants was very far, allowing it to cast the spell unhindered.

Zhang Mu cocked his head slightly, a wooden arrow brushing past his cheek as he raised his hand "Bang! Bang!", continuously firing two rounds. Zhang Mu was a level 4 Ranger, his physique greatly surpassing that of a common man. With an extremely high balance, he was able to aim properly even while moving at high speeds. Unfortunately the bullets bounced off the shield, only dealing 21 damage to the shield.

With only three rounds left, Zhang Mu had already closed the distance to 50 meters, aiming at one of the gnomes to the side. "Bang!" The bullet penetrated the gnome's skull, dealing 32 points of damage. The gnome was killed on the spot, and while the other gnome was attempting to pull back its bow to shoot, it was also shot down in the same manner, instantly dead!

The Gnome Warlock had just finished casting another spell at this time, a ball of flame shooting forth from its rod and condensing into a fireball slightly larger than a fist. In regards to this flame missile, if it directly hit its target, Zhang Mu would be instantly killed. "Gu Gu Gu!" The Gnome Warlock barked out harsh shrieks as it pointed its rod towards Zhang Mu. Amidst its wails, the fireball shot forth at an alarming rate.

Zhang Mu pulled the trigger, firing off the last bullet and shattered the blue coloured shield. This caused a blood flower to emerge on the Gnome's chest, only cutting off 8 points from its health. An Elite ranked monster had much higher defence than a common ranked monster.

Magic spells were not unavoidable. Given Zhang Mu's reflexes and fighting experience, he was able to discern its flight path the moment the fireball was released. As long as the distance was not too close, he could definitely dodge it. Except, Zhang Mu wanted to get close to his

opponent as quickly as possible, rapidly charging forward without bothering to dodge at all. "Thud!" The fireball exploded on his chest, the flames instantly engulfing Zhang Mu.

Qin Min cried out in shock, "Wa!"

The rest of the team were also shocked.

Zhang Mu's body was wrapped in a pale golden light, charging out unscathed from within the flames. His right hand held the dagger in a reverse grip, viciously stabbing at the gnome and dealing 12 damage. The Gnome warlock shrieked, raising its wand to strike, however, the invincibility had not worn off yet, leaving him unharmed. Zhang Mu used Assassinate, stabbing twice in a row and dealt a total of 20 damage. At this moment, the warlock had 60% of its health left.

The Gnome Warlock turned around and ran. As a caster-type monster, it was lacking in close combat and required a bit of distance to cast its spell. As long as it struck, it would be able to kill Zhang Mu, however, Zhang Mu was a Ranger, therefore his movement speed was not slow, especially when you included the status boost from God's Blessing. This allowed him to easily keep up with the gnome, however, even before Zhang Mu took action, Fatty and Sun Bing had already charged forward from the right and left, Sun Bing using Taunt on the gnome to attract the warlock's aggression. This caused him to stop moving, angrily staring at him. A streak of fire formed on his rod, rapidly condensing into a fireball.

"Brutal Charge!"

Fatty was like a rampaging wild boar, suddenly charging at the Gnome

Warlock, hacking down strongly with the axe, and cutting off 28 points of health in 2 hits. The fireball was knocked astray as a result of the collision, barely hitting Sun Bing's right shoulder. The flames enveloped his shoulder in an instant, causing Sun Bing to cry out in pain from the burns. Leng Yun and Qin Min busily ran up trying to put out the fire.

Zhang Mu and Fatty attacked several times before the Gnome Wandering Warlock finally fell.

This was the first time these people had killed an Elite. When looking at the residual traces of fire on the ground, they couldn't believe that what just happened was true.

Suddenly, Fatty loudly cried out, "Woah, look! It dropped a piece of equipment!"

Volume 1: Chapter 10 – The Bloody Jungle

[Gnome Earth Gauntlet] (Ordinary Black Iron) Rank 3, Defense +1, Agility +2, Durability 15/15.

[Gnome Leather Armour] (Ordinary Black Iron) Rank 3, Defense +5, Magic Resistance +2, Durability 20/20

Zhang Mu immediately put on the gnome gauntlets, increasing his defence by 1. Originally, he would have received 5 points of damage, but with the gloves equipped, he would now receive 4 points of damage. While somewhat insufficient, it was still better than nothing. Overall, the equipment raised his agility by 2, which was not bad at all. It could increase his speed significantly.

The gnome leather armour actually raised Defense quite a bit. Originally, he would receive 10 points of damage. After equipping the gnome leather armour, he would only receive 5 points of damage. The common monsters in River City were weak and puny, so as long as one didn't get surrounded by monsters, it was improbable for one to have any life-threatening experiences to worry about.

"The dropped equipment is fairly decent," Zhang Mu nodded his head in satisfaction. "Now, let's open the chest to see what's inside."

Fatty fumbled for a second before finding the button that opens the box. Excitedly rubbing his hands together, he exclaimed, "I'm going to open the box guys! Everyone watch closely!"

Gold Coins: 20

[F Rank Skillbook: Harden Skin] [Fine Iron Round Shield] (Ordinary Black Iron Grade), Rank 3, Defense +8, Agility +8, Durability 30/30 Class Requirement: Shieldsman, Knight, Swordsman.

[Ordinary Low Class MP Pills x 5] Restores 2 MP per second, lasting for 10 seconds.

The treasure chest had a 100% chance of giving medicine or gold coins, as well as a low probability of giving equipment. It also had an extremely low probability of giving skill books or other rare items.

Zhang Mu then distributed the treasure spoils to everyone, "The gnome leather armor goes to Fatty."

Fatty exclaimed in a surprised tone, "You don't even have an armor. Why give this one to me?"

Zhang Mu shot Fatty a glance and said, "The berserker's attacking power is very high, and is the main strength of the team. Oftentimes you have to break through enemy lines, and fight close quarters. If you think the Leather Armor is going to be a hindrance to you, then give it back."

Fatty suddenly interjected laughingly, "Who said I didn't want it? I have to have this armor, or this oldest brother won't be able to release his full power!"

The skill book and iron shield were given to Sun Bing.

Sun Bing, scratching his head and shyly remarked, "You must have made a mistake in distributing the items. I'm the most useless person here after all."

"You need the skill book and shield to unleash the full power of your Knight class. After all, you are essential to the team." Zhang Mu says, handing Sun Bing the items, "These items will only restrict us since they don't fit our classes. Plus, we already have more than enough equipment and items for ourselves already. Don't refuse these items. Take them."

Sun Bing's whole face lit up with gratitude; he then started flipping through the skill book.

[Harden Skin] F Rank Skill, highest level 3, hardens the skin temporarily, making one lose the sensation of pain. The whole body's defence increases +5, agility decreases by 20%. After activation, every 5 seconds will decrease MP by 1. This skill has no cooldown.

Hardening the skin, which decreased the sensation of pain in addition to raising defense, was an essential early skill for Shieldbearers and Knights. Sun Bing was a knight, which had high defence and health. He had the Taunt skill which matched perfectly with his skin hardening skill. With the assistance of his fine quality shield, even elite monsters should be a piece of cake for him to handle. Even if Zhang Mu wasn't there, the four of them together could kill an elite Wandering Warlock Gnomes now.

Zhang Mu handed one of the MP pills to Qin Min and three to Leng Yun. Leng Yun was an elemental master who had a skill that let her temporarily become a Priest. Priests required a sufficient amount of magic so they could use their abilities.

Overall, the spoils from the treasure chest were quite plentiful. Zhang Mu did not greedily keep all the items to himself, however, making him look like a rational and reliable person. Without a doubt, he created a good image of himself to the others. It wasn't Zhang Mu's intention to simply be generous; he knew that this place was dangerous, and over half of the players had died here already. In addition, the dangers in Jiang City cannot even compare to what was up ahead. With a reliable team, his chances of survival were much higher, and they could work together to defeat powerful monsters, obtaining better treasures.

These petty treasures couldn't be considered much anyways, it was better for them to be investments for future gains.

"This armor is so sturdy" Fatty says while pinching the leather, "We really had a good harvest this time. If this could happen a few more times, that would be awesome."

Qing Min snorted, "Treasures chests are definitely not so easily found. How could you expect them to be so easy to find?"

Treasure chests really were not so easily found. it took extraordinary luck for one to encounter them.

Zhang Mu knew the location of many Black Iron Chests, Epic Chests, and special treasure locations. However, all were near Dawn Camp and could easily be found by other players, so they had to hurry to the camp as soon as possible.

The five of them broke into the door of the supermarket, finding tons of chocolate, candy, biscuits, and drinking water inside. They quickly

wrapped up and took the supplies. For the time being, they didn't have to worry about food and water.

Night gradually fell, and all around them scary howls of monsters and beasts echoed. While the sound resonated from all directions, the west especially filled the air with fierce screams, making for a foul and creepy atmosphere. The five players discovered a storage room and broke apart a couple wooden benches to make a small campfire. At least with this small light, they had a sense of warmth and security.

Fatty opened a bottle of beer, strung a couple sausages over the fire, and boiled some water. Zhang Mu rested his eyes. Sun Bing took a smoke, and Leng Yun sat in a daze. All of them sat without a word.

Qing Min broke the silence with, "Everyone stop doing your own things, let the captain speak a few words."

Everyone looks over, then unconsciously stared at Zhang Mu, who was not only their captain, but their spiritual leader as well.

Zhang Mu casually asked, "Fatty, where's your family?"

Fatty spoke, "Fuck, forget it. I don't even know where my drunk of a father is, or which prison he is at now. At the very least, I eat my fill and live contently. I don't have any close relatives to worry about."

"Fatty's life really is not easy." Qing Min interrupted with a sigh, "Zhang Mu, what about your family?"

Zhang Mu, leaning against the wall and looking at the dying fire, said, "My family's in the city, I have a sister but she's not my blood relative. When I was young, my family died in a car accident. Later, an orphanage took me in. When I was roughly ten years old, I was adopted. My new parents were very kind, good hearted, and honest."

Qing Min voiced sadly, "Captain's life was really rough. I have a younger sister as well. Her name was Qin Xiao Shi, and although she was only in high school, she was very beautiful! However, I don't know... how's she doing now."

Zhang Mu suddenly spoke, "Hey Fatty, pass me a cigarette."

"I thought you didn't smoke?"

"Shut up."

Zhang Mu lit the smoke in his mouth, and since he wasn't a regular smoker, his body couldn't adjust. He coughed a few times.

Leng Yun sat across from them. Her eyes stared brightly toward Zhang Mu. Perhaps she also could empathize with his situation and was in the same boat. In her memories, her mother was a beautiful and kind woman, but her father was a dirty playboy, playing with girls every other day. Out of anger, her mother ran away from home. Afterwards, her father started being more cruel to Leng Yun by beating and cursing her, perhaps venting his frustration. Her only close relative was her grandmother.

"My family has two kids." Sun Bing softly spoke, "My son is eight years

old. My daughter is five years old, and I don't know when I'll be able to meet them again."

These children have no way to protect themselves from the dangers. They were mostly likely already gone.

Qing Min comfortingly spoke, "Sun Bing, don't be sad. As long as they live, there is hope."

Zhang Mu added, "Exactly, as long as they live there is hope. Let's reach the camp before dawn. There we can rest easy for a while."

Arriving at Dawn Camp was only but the beginning.

Whether humanity could overcome this obstacle and survive in this period of strife and cruelty was very hard to say. In Zhang Mu's memories, Jiang City was wiped out in 70 days. This time, the question was whether Zhang Mu could use his memories to change history and prevent humanity's destruction.

Not too far away was the Bloody Forest, a very dangerous place that the five of them had to venture through on their journey. Zhang Mu couldn't guarantee that they'd all make it through the forest alive. Fatty, Leng Yun, Sun Bing, and Qing Min would all need luck to make it through safely. Sometimes, luck could be as important as strength as well.

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Early next morning, the five players prepared supplies and equipment before setting off.

Each person carried a backpack filled with food, water, flashlights, lighters, and other tools. They planned to leave this resting area and continue their journey on the road leading west.

Dark clouds blanketed the sky, and there was a light breeze. It wasn't especially hot or cold, and the road, as expected, looked like it had gone through an earthquake. Cracks filled the road. Weeds canvassed the ground. Some wild plants even grew to a meter tall. This was like a desolate wasteland. Occasionally, there was a car at the roadside, but that was all. Besides that, there were no other traces of human life in this area.

After walking for an hour, a sight appeared that flabbergasted the four other people.

Up ahead, the road led into a vast and lush forest. It just suddenly appeared in their vision. The forest exuded a sort of primitive, barbaric air. The size of this forest was enormous, and even though they were far away, the group couldn't see the end of this forest. Behind it, they saw buildings which rose up to the sky to form a large, bustling metropolis. In the front was an ancient, barbaric forest while in the back were tall buildings from human civilization. This contrast truly was beyond human comprehension.

Fatty broke the silence, "This forest is so big! Do we have to go through it?"

Zhang Mu cautiously took out the dagger from his backpack. Determinedly he said, "Yes, we must go in."

The group of five entered the Bloody Forest. After a couple hundred meters, the road abruptly disappeared. The environment quickly turned into a forest.

The trees of the forest were extremely tall and shrouded the sky. The environment was quite hot and humid. After walking for just a bit, the players began to sweat. There was a faint odor in the air, and the ground was blanketed with leaves. With every step, one's foot would crush the fresh layer of leaves on top and reveal the old, decaying leaves underneath. All year round the leaves would continuously pile onto the ground, forming new layers and pushing old ones underneath. Tree roots would coil around enormous broken logs. The trees were so enormous that five people could wrap their arms together around the slippery, moss covered trunks.

How did it in anyway resemble a forest that had sprung up overnight?

Zhang Mu announced, "Everyone, let's take a five minute break. Qing Min, scout out ahead."

Since they all traveled nonstop, they were exhausted.

Zhang Mu was wiping away his sweat, but suddenly he flung his dagger. The blade flew right past Leng Yun's cheek to a nearby tree trunk.

Leng Yun was startled, turning around to see the dagger pinning a thumb sized snake to the tree. The bark of the tree and the skin of the snake were the same color, making it very difficult to distinguish. If Zhang Mu was even a little bit later, Leng Yun would have leaned on it and been bitten.

“Thank you!”

Zhang Mu glanced over at her. Leng Yun was heavily panting. Her sweat soaked her clothes and outlined her sensual curves, especially her ample, plump chest. Her two cheeks were flushed, and her hair became somewhat messy from the perspiration. Even without styling herself, she looked beautiful..

“There are many venomous snakes and poisonous insects in this dangerous forest; be careful!”

“Yes!”

Leng Yun’s heart warmed, and she nodded.

“Captain!” Qing Min rushed back with a flock of fleeing birds, panic written all over her face. “A little over 400 meters from here, there is a monster!”

They were at the edges of the forest, yet they encountered a monster so soon?

“Let me take a look.”

Zhang Mu brought a few group members with him, slowly advancing towards the location of the monster. Not long after, while hiding in the bushes, they found the monster Qing Min was talking about. It was a 400

kilogram black bear; its head and body were approximately three meters long and it looked very strong.

[Berserk Black Bear] (Black Iron Elite) Rank 5, HP 320, Magic 100, Attribute ???, Skill ???, Basic Info: Originally an ordinary black bear, it had since been corrupted by darkness, becoming extremely violent.

Volume 1: Chapter 11: -The Deinonychus

The Black Bear had the same elite ranking as the Wandering Gnome Warlock, except the former was one level higher, and it had 320 health points more than the gnome, an incredibly substantial increase.

Generally, a common black bear would weigh about 100 kg. their bodies growing about 2 meters tall. However, this black bear had grown three meters tall, weighing about 200 kg. Even when it was on all fours, it was still taller than a man's chest. Its body was coated by a glossy layer of fur, and its sinewy limbs were filled with strength, no doubt containing a powerful destructive force.

"Although this monster has high health and defence, it is not as difficult to deal with as the Wandering Gnome Warlock." Zhang Mu glanced at Qin Min as he asked, "Before we take action, we need to rule out the possibility of dangerous terrain. Have you investigated the surrounding area to ensure it is clear yet?"

Qin Min replied, "Yes, the nearby surroundings are all forested, and towards the northwest, there is a river. Within a five hundred meter radius, there are no visible threats."

Fatty heroically volunteered, "Elites are extremely aggressive. Let's not waste time anymore. Boss, let me go up and test myself against it!"

Fatty had a huge confidence boost that was most likely due to his continuous leveling up and his superhuman physique.. Therefore, he was

unhesitant about risking himself. To fight head on against an Elite, however, was also a sort of training. Zhang Mu agreed with Fatty, but to be safe, he allowed Sun Bing to support him.

Stepping out from within the underbrush, Fatty stepped forward with Sun Bing. The Black Bear had stopped in front of a large tree. Shredding the bark from the tree to find bugs and ants to eat, it did not notice the two people that had approached. At this time, Fatty suddenly accelerated quickly and executed a skill – Brutal Charge.

Upon hearing the noise, the Black Bear turned its body with a roar, resulting in a head-on collision. The momentum behind Fatty was equivalent to that of a rhino, forcing the Black Bear to directly smash into the giant tree. Countless trees vibrated from the force of the blow, and countless leaves fell as the loud noise startled nearby birds into flight.

Although the momentum behind the blow was huge, the Black Bear had only lost 21 health points. Fatty raised his axe to chop, hacking open the thick glossy fur at the Black Bear's chest and inflicting intermediate injuries in a single blow.

"Roar!"

The Black Bear exploded into a thunderous rage as it let loose a fierce and brutal roar. Its hind legs stomped heavily as it pounced forward. Fatty was too close to dodge, and he was pinned to the ground by the Black Bear. Its ferocious jaw wrenched open the tough leather armour on Fatty's shoulder. Fortunately, he had the protection of the leather armour, otherwise Fatty would have had his arm torn off. Even so, Fatty still lost a lot of health. His health dropped steeply over several seconds. With a roar, he picked up the axe with one hand, hacking crazily at the Black

Bear's head and fractured its skull, leaving it covered in blood.

Sun Bing urgently used Taunt on the bear, causing it to let go of Fatty's arm and turn its head towards him as it charged over. However, Sun Bing was not reckless like Fatty. Because of that, while facing the Black Bear, he was a bit at loss, but he subconsciously activated the skill Harden Skin, his skin colour rapidly deepening into a greyish stony texture.

The Black Bear thrusted its palm outwards, smashing brutally against Sun Bing's shield and causing him to stagger backwards half a meter. As a result of his stone skin, he experienced no pain as his arm went numb.

It was only a loss of five health!

Such high defence!

Sun Bing's confidence in his abilities shot up. To him, 5 health did not count for anything. Just as he lifted his hammer to retaliate, the Black Bear pounced towards him. This time it stood up tall before slamming down with its two paws. A gigantic force slammed into the shield, and Sun Bing buckled, falling to the ground as he rolled 2 meters before coming to a stop. His body was covered in leaves, and he looked extremely disheveled.

As a result of the Black Bear's sudden pounce, Sun Bing had been unable to defend in time and lost his shield in the fall.

Reality was very different from virtual reality games. Once the players equipped powerful weapons, it would immediately cause their damage

to increase, giving them extremely high offence. Likewise, if a player equipped highly defensive armour, they would immediately become a stable mountain, a powerful tank, to help resist enemy bosses.

However reality was very different.

A person with high defence might not have the qualifications to become a meat shield. Likewise, someone with high attack may not be able to assume the role of a damage dealer. Attack and defence were extremely important, but [strength], [agility], [vitality], [spirit] and other attributes also had a decisive influence. A kitchen knife in a three-year-old's hand bore no offensive power. No matter how good the equipment or how high the defence, if the user did not have the prerequisite abilities, they would not know how to unleash its power. However, if a player had high attributes, they could still perform decently with average equipment.

Even though Sun Bing had decent defence, allowing him to act as a human meat shield, his vitality was not high enough. Therefore the Black Bear's strength was too great, resulting in him easily being brought to the ground.

Fatty roared as he charged over. Raising his axe, he left four deep scars on the Black Bear. Blood stained its fur a messy patch of red. Fatty's attack power and strength was quite good; however, the Black Bear's health was too high. It still had 85% of its health points remaining.

The Black Bear gave up on attacking Sun Bing, pouncing towards Fatty instead. Fatty had already experienced this attack and was careful to keep some distance. He avoided its bite and used its forward momentum to leave a deep wound on its belly. Although the Black Bear failed its bite,

Fatty's dodge was jerky and flawed. This gave the Black Bear the chance to slam a paw down on his chest. The bear's strength was too great, and the bear dealt 20 damage despite Fatty's protective armour, causing Fatty's health to drop straight to 50% and fracturing several ribs in the process.

Sun Bing hurriedly attacked the Black Bear, temporarily attracting its attention. Fatty was extremely violent. Even though he was bleeding from his mouth and nose, he continuously swung the axe to attack. The two sides fought for two or three minutes. The Black Bear's health dropped to 70%. While the two men had taken serious injuries, they were completely outclassed by the Black Bear.

Zhang Mu spoke in a low voice, "With their equipment and skills, it is definitely possible for them to defeat the Black Bear. Only, they are uncoordinated and unskilled in using their strength and in grasping the monster's attack rhythm.

Leng Yun nodded thoughtfully.

Qin Min exclaimed, "Captain Mu Tou, Senior Uncle Fatty looks like he is in trouble!"

Zhang Mu retrieved his dagger, "I will go fight it; you guys watch closely. In fact, this monster is quite weak."

Zhang Mu jumped out from the bushes. Standing on one of the tree trunks that had fallen to the side, he activated his skill – Quick Step. He ran along the trunk as he charged over. The Black Bear was in the midst of overpowering the steadily retreating Sun Bing when it suddenly heard a

sound from the side. Immediately, it turned its head to look. Zhang Mu strongly leapt up, using inertia to jump downwards towards the Bear like a great eagle in the midst of flight.

Before the Black Bear was able to let loose a roar, the dagger flew forward and buried itself in the creature's eye. No matter whether it was strength or attack, Zhang Mu was not like Fatty. He could easily deal a fatal strike in one blow, erasing 10% of the Black Bear's health. The Black Bear clutched its eyes, screaming in pain as it fell backwards.

Zhang Mu quickly wrenched out the dagger. Light reflected off the blade as it moved like a barb attacking the weak and critical parts of the monster. This resulted in a string of injuries that halted the Black Bear's offensive momentum. Even though the bear was blinded in its right eye, felt constant waves of nausea, and was possibly brain damaged, however, it would not die as long as its health did not hit zero.

The Black Bear immediately stabilised its body as it furiously counterattacked. However, Zhang Mu agilely avoided its attacks, hiding in its blind spot while viciously stabbing at it. The Black Bear was beaten into a pathetic state. Its body became covered in seventeen stab wounds. The bear was covered in its own blood and left with 40% health. However, from start to finish, it had not managed to brush Zhang Mu once.

"AOOO!"

When its health dropped to 30%, the Black Bear savagely roared, its body inflating rapidly in size. Its fur radiated a faint red light as from head to toe, it emitted a savage berserk atmosphere.

"It actually has the ability to go berserk?"

When the Black Bear went into a berserk mode, its agility, strength, attack power all rose dramatically. No need to talk about strength or attack, even its agility was equal to Zhang Mu's. However, Zhang Mu did not panic in the slightest. He had completely grasped the Black Bear's battle rhythm, seemingly dodging at the very last second before every attack, retreating as he fought back to the woods, and using the rocks and trees to hamper the Black Bear. Suddenly, Zhang Mu grasped an opportunity and stabbed the bear's left eye.

In the end, the bear finally collapsed to the floor, dropping an item.

Zhang Mu picked it up to take a look. His luck could be considered quite good; a piece of clothing had dropped.

[Bear Leather Armour] (Ordinary Black Iron), requires level 5, +6 defense, +3 spell resistance, +5 maximum health, 20/20 durability.

This was a level 5 Black Iron Equipment. As such, it had better attributes than Fatty's leather armour. Because of the level, however, it could not be currently equipped. Zhang Mu had killed the Black Bear, so he got a large majority of the experience. His experience bar rose to about 50%, basically double of the others.

Zhang Mu stored the leather armor in his backpack, leaving it for use at level 5.

Leng Yun helped Fatty and Sun Bing cure their injuries.

Fatty spoke with a face full of worship, "This bear was way stronger than common monsters. That battle really hurt, but Boss is also strong too. He dealt with it like it was a game."

Having just fought a battle, Zhang Mu was quite exhausted. "Did you guys understand what I meant?"

Leng Yun nodded her head. Her bright eyes flashed as she spoke, "Although I understood a little, without your skill, I will never be able to fight like that."

"The key is to develop awareness of the fight. As long as you have enough awareness, you will be able to quickly hone your skills," Zhang Mu paused before he continued. "Your job is an Elemental Mage. Therefore, your style of combat is very different from close, physical combat occupations. However, good awareness is universal in all strong individuals. Remember the feel of battling and grasp the rhythm of the attacks. Consequently, you can easily match up against even stronger foes."

The group thoughtfully pondered his words.

During this battle, Fatty's performance wasn't too bad. He had displayed the qualities of a berserker, both fierce and courageous. After suffering a setback, he had changed his way of fighting. Sun Bing had performed poorly, but at least he knew how to distract the enemy when Fatty looked like he was in a dangerous situation.

Truly strong individuals were tempered through the fire and flames of

battle, but with the knowledge that Zhang Mu imparted in advance, they might be able to survive longer. Whether or not they survived elimination, it wasn't something he could change.

Zhang Mu tidied up for a while before he spoke, "The smell of blood will attract trouble; we cannot stay here for long, lets go!"

Just as the five people were about to leave, an urgent voice resounded from the northeast.

"There is something close by!"

Several men and women charged out from the forest. Their bodies were covered in cuts and bruises, and their clothing was torn by thorns and branches as they charged through the trees. On their faces were expressions of terror as they desperately ran. It was like there was something terrible chasing them.

"Ow!"

A grey coloured silhouette leapt over the lush shrubs. It swooped overhead, pouncing through the air and bit into a woman. This woman was about 20 years old, and her body and face were both quite pretty. When the monster bit into her shoulder, she immediately fell to the ground screaming. Several identical monsters charged over, tearing her into three pieces in two minutes, splattering blood all over the trees, and painting an extremely bloody picture.

These monsters were about 90 cm in height with a very long rear tail,

stretching about three meters from head to tail. Their front legs were very short, and they had extremely sharp claws. Their hind legs were extremely strong while their maws were covered in razor sharp teeth. With a cold light gleaming in their eyes, their appearances were exactly the same as that of the legendary dinosaurs!

Fatty shouted in shock, "Holy shit, it's a dinosaur!"

[Deinonychus] (Bronze Ranked Boss), level 7, 450 health points, 200 mana points, attributes: ??, skills: ??

Level 7 Bronze Boss!

Even though they could not count the number of monsters clearly, it was visibly more than ten!

At that moment, they pounced on a middle aged man; their sharp claws disemboweled him causing his intestines to spill onto the ground and cover his body in blood. He did not die, however, but continued to struggle desperately. Hysterically, he screamed for help, "AH! Save me! Please save me! I beg you, save ..."

Before he could finish speaking, he had already been torn to shreds by the vicious deinonychus.

Zhang Mu's face fell, visibly paling as he shouted, "Quick, run!"

He had no expectations!

They were only level 4 players. No matter what, they would not be able to fight off a group of bronze elites!

Deinonychus were level 7 bronze elites. They had mediocre defence and health, but they also had extremely high agility. For the current players, they had no way of outrunning the Deinonychus. If they gave in to their fears and dissolved into panic during their escape, they would all be slaughtered by the Deinonychus.

Zhang Mu urgently racked his brains. Suddenly a thought struck him, "There is a river to the northwest; Deinonychus can't swim!"

The desperate people could only clutch at straws, and they ran towards the northeast en masse.

One middle aged auntie was not fit enough and was caught by the Deinonychus. They tore the flesh from her living body as they dug into her. The middle aged auntie fell to the ground, struggling for a brief moment before she was torn to shreds.

This scared the living daylights out of the rest of the people.

At that moment, a Deinonychus swooped from the flank, abruptly slipping into the crowd. With a push from its powerful hind legs, it viciously chomped down on Leng Yun's backpack. The force of the impact threw her to the ground as several Deinonychus charged forward from the back.

Volume 1: Chapter 12 – The Dinichthys

The Deinonychus lived in the Cretaceous era more than 100 million years ago, and was a relative of the Velociraptor. The difference between the two, however, was as plain to see as the difference between a lion and a Persian cat. The Deinonychus is one of the most well known dinosaurs. It is twice the size of a Velociraptor, and has sickle shaped claws that make it possible for it to cut open a rhinoceros's hide. Upon encountering a group of Deinonychus, even larger carnivorous dinosaurs would be hesitant to attack.

As Leng Yun fell to the ground, a Deinonychus bit at her backpack and attempted to tow her away. Leng Yun decisively let go of her backpack and got back up in order to continue running. As a result, the Deinonychus screeched and clawed at Leng Yun's back, leaving behind several bone-deep wounds. This immediately caused three fourths of her health points to drain away!

The flesh on her back was cut down to the bone. Leng Yun nearly fainted, but the hope of survival kept her going. She just had to endure the pain. But would she still be able to run away from the Deinonychus after falling once? The Deinonychus leapt towards Leng Yun, causing her rosey cheeks to turn pale.

Zhang Mu rushed over to her side in the nick of time, and clenched his dagger to slash against the Deinonychus' neck. Its skin, however, was too tough and leathery, so he was only able to inflict 8 damage. While the Deinonychus' attention was shifted, Zhang Mu used Quick Step. It seemed as if he were making his exit on a skateboard together with Leng Yun. A distant whoosh sounded behind them.

This skill was the most beneficial when one needed to run. No matter

where they were, they could use this skill as long as they could use both of their legs.

Leng Yun had narrowly dodged the Gates of Hell.

"No matter what happens, don't stop running!" Zhang Mu said as he twisted his head back, "Qin Min, throw your backpack away!"

Qin Min kept running while simultaneously taking off her backpack, and throwing it onto the ground. She was a Summoner, so her dexterity and physical skill levels weren't very high. Her speed and endurance would doom her unless she lightened her load, and the Deinonychus would have definitely caught up to her.

At this moment, a woman fell down, and the Deinonychus bit down at her. While she was alive, it tore off half of her face, causing her eyeballs to squeeze out of their sockets and blood to cover her face. This was truly a demon from the depths of Hell. She desperately clung onto a tree root while crying for help and crawling forward. The Deinonychus bit off part of the flesh on her waist and possibly part of her butt numerous times, tearing off huge chunks of flesh. Unless the player's health points reached zero, they would not be able to die. This amount of vitality was extraordinary for an ordinary person, but this only extended the woman's inhumane torture.

Zhang Mu wasn't able to save her, and was only able to listen as her screams became increasingly shrill, leaving a haunting sense of hopelessness lingering in the depths of his soul. The survivors madly struggled through the dense overgrowth of the jungle. Everyone ran like their lives depended on it, and finally, they arrived at a wide river after a few minutes.

The river's bank was large, and there were approximately ten large trees surrounding the land. Each tree was thick enough for several people to wrap their arms around it, and each tree had several vines hanging from it. The vines blocked one's line of sight from seeing the end of the river. The water was a bit muddy, and algae, twigs, and leaves floated upon its surface. Thankfully, the river was slow moving and would not carry them away.

The Deinonychus chased after them on the shore, but they could not swim after them as they were naturally unable to swim. The dinosaurs were only able to run back and forth around the river bank, screeching continuously. The group had narrowly escaped. After swimming across seven or eight meters, the river had already reached a depth of about two meters. This meant that the center of the river had to be about six or seven meters deep.

Fatty's foot hit open air, and he fell into the water. After taking in two mouthfuls of the river's water, he exclaimed "Ah! It's no use, I can't fucking swim!"

Zhang Mu found a large piece of floating driftwood and threw it towards him. In order to lighten his load, Fatty deposited his axe into his backpack. He held onto the piece of driftwood, only able to barely keep himself from sinking as he swam with the current.

Several people swam towards the center of the river. Finally, after pacing around for awhile, the Deinonychus lost interest and turned around, making their return back towards the center of the jungle.

Qin Min, still suffering from the shock, asked, "Are we safe now?"

"Maybe not!" Zhang Mu looked around, "The river is flowing too slowly. We should hurry and get out."

Looking in the near distance, Sun Bing astonishedly asked, "Is there someone else in the river?"

Suddenly, everyone felt a ripple form in the middle of the river. There was definitely someone or something moving under water, and everyone's expressions couldn't help but contort drastically.

A black man boldly called out, "It's no good! There's something in the center of the river, swim over to the opposite bank!"

All of a sudden, something rose out of the water. A sinister monster arose. The monster resembled a centipede, and its body was an ash gray in color. It was approximately a meter long, had a thick shell covering its thighs and back, and had ten pointed feet. The first foot was the thickest, and was about two-thirds of a meter long. It was very sharp and knife-like, resembling a saw toothed sickle.

【Eurypterid】(Common), Level 4, 30 health points, 30 mana.

The river's center was filled with strange, ugly insects. Within the span of a few seconds, hundred of insects were clinging onto their feet, making their scalps tingle.

This insect-like-fish monster had thick thighs that were at least a meter

long!

A huge meter long insect? What was this thing?

If this was in normal China, a normal little girl would faint at the spot. A man wouldn't do much better either. What's more is that there wasn't only one of them, but hundreds! At least one hundred of them! To their surprise, the most deadly place to be in was at the center of the river, and now everyone was on their own. The dreadful situation caused them to shout in fear as despair surged through their hearts.

Zhang Mu reacted the quickest, "Don't swim over to the river banks, it's too far and there's not enough time. There are trees at the end of the river, climb up them!"

The river was lined with many trees. Most of them were about 30 feet long and thick enough for a person to wrap their arms around the trunk. The dense foliage blocked the sun, acting like a huge umbrella standing over the water's edge. These trees were their only hope of survival. The tree that Zhang Mu was closest to was covered in slimy moss. Fortunately, the moss was uneven and bumpy, which meant that it provided enough leverage for one to climb up. Due to that and his skill, he was able to climb up in no time.

One after another, other people began to swim over to a tree. Fatty, who could not swim, was very lucky to float over to a fat tree just in the nick of time. He hurriedly abandoned the driftwood and went over to climb up the tree trunk.

"Squeak, squeak," strange noises began to cry out.

Two of the strange insects jumped out of the water. One fell on top of Fatty's back, and the other one fell on his butt. Their sickle-like forelegs quickly left behind several bloody holes on Fatty's body. Fatty screamed out in pain. His back was completely dyed red with blood, but he didn't dare to let go. Instead, he desperately forced himself to climb up. Sun Bing saw this from the side and promptly took out his shield to swat the strange insects down.

Other people were also suffering from the strange insects' attacks.

As the bulky dark-faced man climbed halfway up a tree, he slipped on the slippery lichen on the bark of the tree and plunged into the water. This resulted in ten of the strange insects to surround the man immediately as their sharp and slender forelimbs mercilessly plunged into his body.

"AH! AH!"

The dark-faced man was covered by the strange insects. He frantically screamed as he struggled to dislodge them. Fresh blood dyed the surrounding water a sickly red. While the Eurypterids weren't very strong, being surrounded by ten of them in a disadvantageous river environment meant it was impossible to escape. The large man was quickly disembowelled, dying pitifully in the depths of the river.

Zhang Mu climbed onto a big tree while Leng Yun struggled to climb up behind him. A couple of the insects had followed behind her. These monsters obviously also had some climbing ability. Since their two limbs were too short, and because they were unsuited to climbing, they were

only able to move very slowly.

"Hurry up!"

Zhang Mu pulled Leng Yun up. Then, he retrieved two daggers and struck at two of the strange insects. Although they were level 4 monsters, the Eurypterids had abnormally low health and defence. As long as they were stabbed at their critical areas, they would definitely die. Zhang Mu stabbed and killed four of the insects that were trying to climb up. Meanwhile, Leng Yun also took out a sharp dagger from her waist and worked together with Zhang Mu to repel the strange insects. The insects must have felt that this wasn't easy prey, and so they reluctantly jumped back into the water after a while.

On a large tree not too far away, Fatty had also succeeded in climbing up. He used his axe to hack five or six of the strange insects to death while Sun Bing had used his shield to fend off the attacks of the strange insects. On yet another tree, Qin Min and an unknown couple had managed to take shelter. The three people wielded daggers, clubs, and other weapons. Currently, they were in the midst of driving the swarm away.

Finally, the swarm retreated.

The unfortunate large man had been shredded to pieces by the Eurypterids. Several dozens of them surrounded the body as they madly thrashed, ripping pieces of flesh from the corpse. Everyone else stood atop the large trees, helplessly watching as a man that had been kicking and breathing mere moments ago was erased by the swarm of horrifying insects.

The strange insects swarmed around the corpse, forming three layers on top of each other, happily eating away. A ripple in the water not too far away revealed the presence of something approaching. The Eurypterids seemed to have been visibly shaken, as they simultaneously slipped into the water, dispersing in all directions. Only a few remained, too distracted by their meal to notice.

Then, a gush of water whipped forth. A terrifying huge dark silhouette burst forth from the water. It had a humongous jaw capable of swallowing half a bus. The large man's corpse and remaining strange insects were swallowed in one mouthful, and with a "Hua la" sound, it sunk back into the depths of the murky water.

[Dinichthys], level 9 Bronze Boss, health: ?? (100%), mana: ?? (100%).

The players were probably unable to see the monster's health due to their overwhelming gaps in strength. The monster was very similar to the Dunkleosteus from tales and legend, a prehistoric creature that rampaged in the Late Devonian period 400 million years ago, dating about 100 million years before the dinosaurs appeared. The Dunkleosteus were over ten meters in length, and they had a bite force ranging from five to ten tons, more than enough strength to snap a Deinonychus in half.

This was something that would give any man the chills. Extinct monsters that had died millennia ago were appearing in this jungle.

Zhang Mu maintained a calm appearance despite this, not scared one bit by the appearance of the gigantic fish. However, he wrinkled his brow slightly, "This monster's body is very big, but it's not very flexible. It will be unable to attack us at our current height."

Leng Yun was unable to shake off her lingering fears, "It was... really too terrifying!"

Having just emerged from the water, the party was completely soaked. Leng Yun's glossy hair clung to her chest. Water dripped from its ends, while her clothes clung closely to her exquisite body, accentuating the rise and fall of her chest. She had three bone-deep slashes on her back. Fresh blood oozed unceasingly from the wounds, a result of the Deinonychus' attack. She began to feel a chilling numbness in her four limbs. Her head felt slightly dizzy as a result of her excessive blood loss. She was possibly suffering from the onset of wound infections.

Leng Yun took off her outer coat, exposing a white short sleeve T-shirt. Most likely due to her body's amazing shape, the T-shirt that covered her curves was clearly visible, and it exposed a fourth of her tender white chest. The deep and mysterious divide was alluring enough to entice any man's imagination. Thankfully, at this moment, no one had the attention to spare to notice such things. So Leng Yun began to heal herself.

Zhang Mu observed the surrounding environment. The tree branches were extremely dense, and their branches were covered in moss. Under the dark rotting bark, there was a countless number of cocoons and green caterpillars. They were undetectable if one did not carefully observe and notice them. According to adventuring common sense, such bugs often had a toxic nature.

"It won't be long until the sky turns dark. We will have to spend the night up here." Zhang Mu glanced up at the sky through the thick foliage and took out a dagger, "Let's clean up first."

Leng Yun healed her wounds and put on her coat before she went to help Zhang Mu clear up the surrounding branches.

The sky gradually turned dark. The sound of shrieks and screams echoed out from within the depths of the jungle. Anyone who has been in a jungle before would know that the evening was the most dangerous time of day to be in it!

Volume 1: Chapter 13 – Underwater Treasure Chest

Temperatures would range drastically in the jungle. When the sun was just starting to set, temperatures had already started to drop.

The so-called endless rain was unexpected as it poured down from the sky, striking tree leaves on its way down. The wetness combined with the freezing cold was unbearable. With the barbaric forest filled with fierce monsters, people in these desperate circumstances were on the verge of mental collapse. This was only the first day in the bloody jungle, and yet, the dangers they had encountered so far had vastly exceeded their limits.

As the surroundings grew increasingly darker, Leng Yun felt cold, hungry, and afraid. From the moment she was born till now, she had never felt so helpless before.

"The rain will disperse our scent, making it difficult for the monsters to find us, so the rain's good." Zhang Mu wiped the rain from his face before taking out a few pieces of chocolate and a box of biscuits from his backpack. He handed them to Leng Yun and said, "Eat it".

Leng Yun's spirit rose thanks to the mysterious and powerful man at her side. "Thank you for saving me".

Zhang Mu smiled. "We are comrades after all."

Leng Yun, who was slightly touched, nodded her head.

Without realising it, her cheeks suddenly started to blush a little.

"What?" Zhang Mu asked in bewilderment.

Leng Yun, lowered her head and said, "I ... I need to pee".

"That ... you will need to deal with it on the tree." Zhang Mu turned and said, "Hurry up, I sent Qin Min to deliver food to the rest."

Leng Yun, who felt a little embarrassed, whispered a quiet, "Thank you."

Not far away, Fatty and Sun Bing were sitting in a tree. Fatty and Sun Bing opened their backpacks for water and food. Each had just enough for another meal. Qin Min was stuck with the two strangers. Because they had lost their backpacks in the forest, they were left without a morsel to eat. Fortunately, the trees weren't far away from each other, so Zhang Mu put his backpack on a vine and swung it to the other tree to send them some food.

As Zhang Mu came back, Leng Yun had just returned. Her face was a bright shade of pink. Zhang Mu did not feel any awkwardness in this at all, as he was too tired and hungry from a day's worth of travelling. He took out some ham and chocolate from his backpack to eat.

Leng Yun frowned at the little amount of food in the backpack, "We don't have much food, it'll only last two or three days."

"Yes, food will be an issue." Zhang Mu ate a few pieces of chocolate, staring at the ripples in the water, "Fatty's bag is at the bottom of the

river, but it has a lot of supplies in it. I will go and retrieve it."

Leng Yun exclaimed in shock and protest, "But the water is full of monsters!"

To this, Zhang Mu confidently replied, "Don't worry, the rain has muddied up the water so the Dinichthys won't be able to find me easily in the rain."

No one was eager to enter the water, yet Zhang Mu wanted to dive into the water. Was this courage, or madness?

Leng Yun deeply stared at Zhang Mu. Her entire body miserably drenched. Hidden within her ordinarily delicate expression was a pair of deep dark eyes filled with an aura of wisdom and calm like a bottomless lake that one could lose oneself in. Leng Yun felt like her heart about about to skip a beat. She was unable to carry on speaking.

"You stay in the the trees", Zhang Mu said, catching a hold of a couple of vines. After testing them for a couple of times, he found the strongest one. The vine was approximately two fingers thick, its surface was extremely rough, making it extremely difficult for one to lose one's grip.

Leng Yun simply said, "Be careful!"

Zhang Mu took a deep breath before leaping from the tree branch in a delicate arc, plunging hands first into the depths of the water.

The underwater was extremely silent, giving the perception of having

one's senses cut off. The water was cold and cloudy, making it extremely difficult to see through. The bottom of the river was covered in broken branches and countless water plants. Zhang Mu had managed to land very accurately into the water, and he found the backpack in a short amount of time. He swam to the bottom, picking it up and turning to leave.

At this moment, something in the water caught his attention.

Within the depths of the murky water, there was a Black Iron treasure chest. Its size was larger than the chest from the day before, and it was covered in patterns that were also more delicate.

Zhang Mu intrinsically understood, that the prior chest had only been a [Common Grade Black Iron Treasure Chest]. Although they were both Black Iron Treasure Chests, the latter was much larger, and therefore, it had a higher probability of producing a skill book or rare materials.

"To find a treasure chest underwater, I have to admit, is really a stroke of good luck!"

Zhang Mu scanned the surroundings, finding no sign of danger. He quickly swam towards the treasure chest, ten meters, five meters, three meters... Just as he was about to reach out to the chest, he suddenly felt a shift in the water currents, and a huge dark shadow lunged towards him.

The damned Dinichthys had come again!

Zhang Mu instinctively knew that danger was close. However, instead of

flinching and shrinking back, he slowly made his way over to the side of the treasure chest, carefully prying open the chest. Within the chest, there were several red coloured health potions and gold coins... additionally, there were also two other items that caused Zhang Mu to be momentarily stunned. There was a red bead the size of a thumb, as well as a skill book!

Yet another skill book!

However, at this moment, Zhang Mu did not have the time to celebrate. The Dinichthys violently twisted its body and set off ferocious currents in the water when it aggressively charged over.

Trouble had arrived! The Dinichthys had discovered his presence!

The water was about six meters deep, making it highly unlikely that he could escape by outswimming it. Zhang Mu grabbed ahold of the backpack and swam backwards, narrowly making it to the shelter of a large underwater root before the Dinichthys' giant maw slammed into the root. Its roar echoed out from the depths of its skull as it struggled to snap the roots.

Zhang Mu had hidden behind a cluster of thick roots the size of a man's thigh. These roots had intertwined with each other and would be unusually strong. As the Dinichthys' maw slammed into the roots, it snapped off a sizeable chunk of the roots, leaving debris strewn everywhere as it removed one third of Zhang Mu's temporary shelter.

The Dinichthys' maw actually encompassed the entire root and trapped Zhang Mu inside. He could see the approaching barbed teeth, and once

the monster managed to shut its mouth, he would definitely be shredded to death.

The Dinichthys bit down continuously three times, but it was unable to snap the roots.

However, this did not alleviate Zhang Mu's situation, since he was beginning to suffer from severe hypoxia. His lungs felt like they were ripping apart. He could not wait here any longer, otherwise he would suffocate to death.

He steeled his nerves, and burst forth from the other side, swimming towards the surface of the water. When the Dinichthys saw this, it immediately released the mass of roots and lunged towards Zhang Mu, its gaping maw full of sharp teeth about to tear Zhang Mu to shreds. At that moment, Zhang Mu was engulfed in 7 coloured rays of light, causing the 10 meter long Dinichthys to be bounced back.

A ranked skill, God's Blessing!

Zhang Mu utilised this short moment of invincibility to fend off the monster, and then aided by the attribute bonus of the skill, he temporarily boosted his speed. This allowed him to burst through the surface of the water and climb to the top of a tall tree in the time required to take several breaths.

"Hua!"

From behind came the surge of water as the Dinichthys lunged forth

from the water. Zhang Mu quickly leapt to the back of the tree, leaving the Dinichthys to brutally smash its forehead against the tree. This caused the large tree to shake as the Dinichthys' razor sharp teeth embedded into the tree's bark, tearing off a chunk as it finally fell back into the water.

Zhang Mu immediately climbed up the tree after narrowly dodging the attack.

"Sssiiii – Hou!"

Having failed to catch its prey, the Dinichthys unwillingly wandered around under the surface of the water.

Zhang Mu grabbed onto a vine, swinging over to the tree that Leng Yun was on. Leng Yun reached out her hand, and pulled Zhang Mu up.

Leng Yun anxiously asked, "Are you alright?"

Zhang Mu gasped as he swallowed a large mouthful of air, "I'm okay. I barely dodged that!"

The surrounding people were wide-eyed, shocked by Zhang Mu's extraordinary courage.

Was he even a human?

Fatty shouted over from a tree not too far away, "Fuck, Boss you're too

much! You even dare to provoke that damned bastard."

Zhang Mu had already recovered his breath, and when he heard Fatty's cankerous jibes, he immediately scolded him, "How are you not embarrassed? Wasn't it you, this stupid pig, that dropped the backpack into the water, forcing me to go retrieve it?"

This Fatty was truly thick skinned. Instead of minding Zhang Mu's words, his eyes lit up in response. "My bag?! Hey Boss, let me just tell you that those sausages are mine, so please don't eat them."

This rascal really was a unique character. Even at this moment he was still concerned about his sausages.

Knowing that he had escaped eminent danger, the first thing Zhang Mu did was inspect the skill book and the red coloured bead.

[Exploding Bead], FF grade, special item, costs 10 mana to activate, creates an explosion with a radius of 1 meter, dealing a minimum of 30 damage, and grants a 50% chance to stunning for two seconds.

This is a one-off consumable combat item.

[Ice Arrow Level 1], F+ ranked skill, maximum level 3, range of 50 meters, deals 10 damage + 100% spell damage, with a 50% chance for bonus spirit damage. Reduces victim's movement speed by a certain proportion, and costs 5 mana points with 30 seconds cooldown.

This skill book was for Elemental Mages.

"Damn, this skill book isn't for me!". Zhang Mu's eyes fell on the Dinichthys that was looming in the water, suddenly nodding as he spoke, "Perhaps we can kill this guy!"

Upon hearing this, Leng Yun was extremely shocked. "That monster is a level nine bronze ranked boss, he is way stronger than the Deinonychus. Will we really be able to kill this guy with our current strength?"

The Dinichthys was an extremely terrifying Elite boss, except that after the brief moment of invulnerability, Zhang Mu had realized several of its weaknesses. Even though it had a huge body, it was inflexible in its methods and extremely aggressive, and it only knew how to charge blindly. This Dinichthys was mostly likely the Dunkleosteus fishes from the prehistoric era which eventually went extinct, allowing the smaller, weaker sharks to become the overlords of the seas. There was definitely a reason behind this. As Darwin had mentioned in the past, "The beast that is able to survive through the ages, isn't the strongest, nor is it the most intelligent. Rather, it is able to survive based on its ability to adapt." The Dunkleosteus fishes being driven to extinction was most likely a result of their inability to adapt.

"Of course I have an idea." Zhang Mu passed the skill book over to Leng Yun. "I found a treasure chest at the bottom of the river, and I managed to get an Elemental Mage still book. You might as well go learn it."

Leng Yun obviously understood the value of the skill book. From the moment she was born she did not like to owe anything to other people. However, from the way things were looking, she was owing Zhang Mu more and more.

Zhang Mu spoke, "The Dinichthys is a level 9 bronze ranked elite. If we can kill him, the experience gained would be phenomenal. However, let us think of an idea for us to do it together"

These trees had grown to be very big, with many in close proximity to others, allowing them to get to each other by swinging on the vines. Fatty, Sun Bing, Qin Ming and the others expended a decent amount of effort to swing over with the vines, finally gathering together on one tree. Apart from the five people from Zhang Mu's party, there was also a couple.

The male was a high school boy of a tall stature, about half a head shorter than Zhang Mu, built extremely skinny with a pair of eyes surrounded by dark eyes bags. his appearance was slightly dull, giving off the air of an extremely ordinary person. The standard image of an otaku. The female was a 30 year old woman, with an oval face, slim build, fair complexion, and she could be said to have good looks and temperament.

At the moment, the two of them were suffering from shock, continuously trembling from shock.

"This is our leader, Zhang Mu." Qin Ming said as she introduced the two. She pointed at the two of them, "His name is Liu Yao, and this older sister is called Chen Ling."

Zhang Mu did not care, as he was only interested in their skills and levels.

The two people were only level 3. Although It wasn't high, they would

still make do.

Liu Yao was a thief and had acquired the initial skill [Charge]. This was originally a swordsman's F ranked skill, somewhat similar to Zhang Mu's quick step. it allowed one to move quickly in a linear direction; with quick cooldown, it was useful for attacking and escaping.

Chen Ling was a swordsman and had acquired the initial skill [Rush]. This was the F ranked skill for Rangers, Rogues, Assassins, which provided a dramatic boost of movement speed temporarily when turned on.

As such, it was no surprise that the two had managed to run so quickly, as they had the help of movement skills.

Heavenly Calamity Chapter 14: Killing the Dinichthys

Zhang Mu was preparing to kill the Dinichthys.

He had to first locate two trees closely leaning together in a forest at a high altitude. Their trunks had to be thick enough for six people to wrap their arms around it, and had to be only a meter apart from each other, as that would function as their battlefield.

Zhang Mu had Fatty and Sun Bing hide at the tree's crack, and he and the others would follow them and hide on top of the tree.

"Whether we can kill the Dinichthys or not depends on the both of you." Zhang Mu explained to the two men, "Remember, the Dinichthys is brutal, so don't panic. It will become infuriated, which can possibly lead it to initiate ten more attacks, but the Dinichthys won't be able to reach you through the tree's crack since its head is too big."

Fatty huddled within the tree crack, both legs shaking, "Ah! Boss, it's not that I don't believe you, but this doesn't seem like a good idea, eh? If by any chance the Dinichthys comes straight towards me and Sun Bing, we'll be screwed."

Zhang Mu dropped down several ropes and explained, "Tie these ropes above your waist. We can pull you two up if anything goes wrong." Zhang Mu opened up a treasure chest and gave Sun Bing and Leng Yun a potion, while turning towards Sun Bing to say, "You play a vital role in this attack. You have to taunt the Dinichthys in order to force it to continuously attack."

Sun Bing nervously nodded and replied, "Yes!"

Zhang Mu nodded with satisfaction, "In that case, let's begin. I'll lure the Dinichthys here."

Fatty said, "Ok! Take care of yourself, boss."

Zhang Mu jumped into the water to lure the Dinichthys to him. Only a few minutes passed before the Dinichthys found Zhang Mu, and it powerfully roared before following him over.

Sun Bing saw that its head was approximately ten meters long. He involuntarily fell and gasped as the Dinichthys emerged, before forcing himself to taunt it. The Dinichthys became infuriated and promptly gave up on pursuing Zhang Mu in order to turn and run straight into the tree's crack. The tree's crack was small and V shaped, so the Dinichthys wasn't able to squeeze through, so it decided to strike the tree instead, causing the tree to sway incessantly.

Everyone became frightened; their knees weakened!

The new members, Chen Ling and Liu Yao, nearly wet their pants.

The Dinichthys' body was approximately ten meters long. It had a big head but a small tail. Its head was flat, it had two cold scarlet eyes, and white sawlike teeth, making everyone tremble with fear. The Dinichthys' head was too big, rendering it unable to advance, and thus, it became stuck in the middle of the tree's crack, unexpectedly unable to pull back.

"Kill it!"

Fatty had that crucial moment to display his ferociousness. He lifted his axe using both hands, and took two steps towards the Dinichthys in order to split it in two. Fatty was a level 4 berserker; his axe's strength, as well as his own, could not be looked down upon, but the layer of skin outside of the Dinichthys' skull was too hard. So, the impact of the blow did not harm it, and the attack only inflicted 3 damage.

The Dinichthys had approximately 900 health points, so the attack was unable to do much damage.

"Everyone, listen to my command." Zhang Mu climbed up the tree to observe the situation, "Leng Yun, use Ice Arrow!"

A white, ice cold ball of mist converged in the center of Leng Yun's hand, and a sparkling, pure, meter long ice arrow formed. Cold air surrounded them. The arrow was very powerful. The ancient sorcery was performed swiftly and with great spiritual strength. Leng Yun cast the spell in only three seconds, and then she immediately took aim and shot the ice arrow at the Dinichthys.

Whoosh!

The Dinichthys was too big, so it was still stuck inside of the tree's crack. Leng Yun hoped that she could do a lot of damage. The ice arrow pierced through the Dinichthys' hard head, inflicting 22 damage, and caused frost to begin to spread on the Dinichthys' body, slowing it down. She was one of the best in elemental magic damage, and the Dinichthys'

magic defense clearly wasn't at a high level.

Even though the Dinichthys' injury was just a small flesh wound, it became completely infuriated, and the Dinichthys began striking the big tree even more frantically. It started to bite towards Fatty and Sun Bing from time to time. After the Dinichthys' repeated biting attempts, Fatty summoned the courage to initiate a frenzied attack.

The Dinichthys was immediately met with six or seven long, thin cuts.

Zhang Mu thoroughly commanded. His observation was extremely accurate, and he knew exactly when to dodge and when to attack, as his timing was very precise. As Fatty had become more experienced through several battles, his outstanding talent for battling was beginning to emerge, and while under command, he gained self control, and began to grasp the attack's tempo.

But Fatty's damaging ability was too low leveled, and he inflicted less than 20 damage.

Both sides were at a stalemate for a few minutes. The Dinichthys' health points were at more than 95%, and since it was unable to attack its target, the Dinichthys gradually became bored. Withdrawing its body, it prepared to leave.

"Don't let it get away!" Zhang Mu shouted: "Ice Arrow! Taunt it!"

Leng Yun shot her ice arrow at the Dinichthys in order to slow it down. Sun Bing's taunt recharged, and the Dinichthys looked as if it were greatly

insulted. Lighting up with rage once again, it violently roared at the two men as it began attacking, biting off several huge chunks of tree bark, but since the bark was too thick and hard, it was unable to destroy it in a short amount of time.

They continued to wear it down for about 30 minutes. The magic potion was rapidly depleting, and the Dinichthys' health points were at 40%. Its head was being split open with an axe numerous times, and it was already badly mangled, causing its defense to dramatically decrease. Now, Fatty's axe inflicted about 6 or 7 damage.

After about ten more minutes, the Dinichthys' health points were at less than 20%; it had already suffered heavy damage, and it began yelling powerlessly more and more, attempting again to withdraw its body and run away.

Sun Bing skillfully taunted it, but the Dinichthys' appearance remained the same, and it continued to pull back. It came to the conclusion that it had miscalculated, so the Dinichthys no longer paid attention, and prepared to dive into the river.

This was real; it wasn't just a computer game. Although the Dinichthys wasn't very smart, it was still able to distinguish some things. If it continued to fight, it would only die, so it began to hurriedly retreat. This time, no matter how many times Sun Bing used his level 1 taunt, it was unable to draw it back.

Fatty shouted, "I'm so tired. I'm nearly half dead, ah, it's quickly escaping! What do we do, Boss!"

"You go rest, let me handle this!"

Zhang Mu immediately jumped down from the tree, and fell on top of the *Dinichthys*' massive head. He retrieved his dagger, and whoosh, stabbed the *Dinichthys*' eye, inflicting 50 damage. It was a critical attack; the high damage dealt a deadly blow.

Zhang Mu violently thrust his dagger into the *Dinichthys* several times, causing it to frantically twist around. This resulted in the fish's body becoming difficult for Zhang Mu to hold onto, and it forced him to jump off. The *Dinichthys* turned around and threw him off, and as Zhang Mu unsteadily stood up, the *Dinichthys* opened up its mouth, going over to bite him. Zhang Mu saw that he was unable to dodge or flee from the attack, so he did something unexpected. He didn't dodge it, but instead charged forward, spontaneously going into its large mouth.

God's Blessing!

Zhang Mu's body radiated seven colors of light, blocking the *Dinichthys* from chewing on him, and he simultaneously used Exploding Bead. Stuffing it into the *Dinichthys*' esophagus, a loud bang resounded, and the flesh inside the *Dinichthys*' mouth was blown to pieces. The smoke that began to fill the air smelled scorched.

The attack was extremely deadly, and the *Dinichthys*' health points rapidly approached zero.

Slashing about five or six times, Zhang Mu used his dagger to frantically slice his way out of the *Dinichthys*' jaw.

Eventually, the *Dinichthys*' mouth filled with blood, and it howled in anguish as it weakened. Its belly was turned up towards the air, and it struggled several times to get back up, but it was no longer able to move.

Zhang Mu was covered from head to toe in blood from the *Dinichthys*' big mouth as he made his way out. Although he had God's Blessing for protection, its invincibility effect was too short, and he was unable to dodge several deadly attacks. The *Dinichthys*' tooth was lodged in his stomach, taking away half of his health points, creating one enormous wound that caused his organs to become faintly visible.

"Boss!"

"Boss!"

Fatty was the only one who couldn't swim, so the others clamored over to jump into the river to save Zhang Mu, who was more than just their captain, but also their spiritual leader.

Leng Yun saw that Zhang Mu's whole body was covered in blood, and that the *Dinichthys*' tooth would eventually pass through him. She was afraid that it might go through his heart.

Several people swam over to Zhang Mu's side to aid him.

Two minutes later, the *Dinichthys* lost all of its health points.

Since he dealt the final blow, Zhang Mu received the most experience,

with Leng Yun and Fatty receiving the second most, as they harmed the monster, followed by Sun Bing. Since Qin Min, Liu Yao, and Chen Ling solely profited, they received the least amount of experience points.

[Level Up!]

Zhang Mu, Fatty, Leng Yun, and Sun Bing leveled up to level 5, and all of their injuries were fully healed. Qing Min's experience points went up to 96%, and Liu Yao and Chen Ling received only a few experience points, but were still close to reaching level 4.

The Dinichthys dropped several pieces of loot.

【Dinichthys' Sword】

(Superior Black Iron) Equip level 5, physical damage +18, sharpness +5, 10% chance to inflict large cuts, 30 durability.

【Fish Bone Staff】(Common Black Iron) Magic damage +10, casting speed +5%, 20 durability.

【Jungle Cloak】(Common Black Iron) health points +10, speed +3, 20 durability.

Monsters that are of a higher level than average could either be divided into solitary monsters, or group monsters. The Dinichthys was an elite solitary monster, and the Deinonychus were group elite monsters. A solitary monster's experience gain was generally several times higher than an elite group monster's, because a solitary monster was generally

more difficult to handle.

They earned a very generous amount of loot this time, and they gained three black iron equipment pieces. Among these three items, there was one that was superior black iron. The same equipment could be broken down into subdivisions of poor, common, superior, or outstanding quality. Out of these four different properties, the outstanding equipment quality was the highest.

Zhang Mu picked up the Dinichthys' sword. The sword was about a meter long. It was surrounded in a layer of cold light, and both of the blade's edges were covered with sinister sawlike teeth.

Only Rangers, Swordsmen, and Knights could equip single hand swords, and only Rangers, Thieves, Assassins, and Hitmen had the option to dual wield. Zhang Mu had his dagger equipped in his left hand, so he equipped the Dinichthys' sword in his right hand. The Dinichthys' sword was a superior black iron weapon that dealt up to 18 damage, which allowed Zhang Mu to deal more damage than Fatty. This was only natural because of his class and because he was definitely better than him.

【Fish Bone Staff】The fish bone staff was a rare master equipment, and therefore, it was given to Leng Yun who would now be able to inflict high elemental damage. Having the staff doubled their power.

【Jungle Cloak】The jungle cloak raised dexterity, and since Zhang Mu's favorite attribute was dexterity, he was welcome to the equipment.

Qin Min let out a long sigh of relief, complaining, "You're too reckless, Captain!"

"That was nothing." Zhang Mu's face was undisturbed, appearing as if it had never happened, "Risks and benefits coexist with one another, our reward was not small."

They had actually defeated the Dinichthys – the seemingly invincible monster!

This battle not only slightly benefitted the entire team, but it also helped three team members level up to level 5, which raised the team's morale and eliminated all feelings of despair.

The rain gradually stopped.

Many ripples formed on the middle of the river. Strange insects became attracted to the Dinichthys' dead carcass, and they began to gather around, covering it. These strange insects were very weak, but were quite formidable in large numbers, which discouraged people from provoking them. Zhang Mu went over to the Dinichthys' belly and began cutting off several chunks of meat before leaving the area. They went over to the top of the huge opposite tree, but didn't climb down since the sky began to quickly darken, and because they planned to spend the night in the safety of the tree.

Zhang Mu cut down a few pieces of pine wood, because it was rich in resin. Therefore, even if it was a little wet, it only would need to dry a little bit before one could light it aflame and build a bonfire to warm themselves up, which would be more than fitting at that moment.

Volume 1: Chapter 15 – The Spider Monster

The rain completely stopped once night descended upon the forest canopy.

Under the cover of darkness, the heart of the forest awoke from its slumber. Every nook and cranny was filled with the noise of chirping crickets, and of course, the roars of monsters, which lingered in their ears. The noises were erratic, with some sounding far off, while others sounded much closer. Even though they were among tree branches, fifteen feet above ground, straight below them was the water's surface. Although they didn't need to be wary of monster attacks, it still made them feel uneasy.

Zhang Mu used logs to construct a simple scaffolding across the gaps between the tree branches. After that, they only had to throw some leaves over it in order to make a bed, then use some pinewood to make a fire pit and start a bonfire. The flame's warmth throbbed, bringing about a small, bright light in the midst of the cold, pitch black night.

Several slices of Dinichthys meat were roasting on the fire. A few people's stomachs rumbled with hunger as they began to enjoy their dinner. The Dinichthys was a monster that instilled fear into people's hearts, but its meat was of excellent quality. The meat on its belly was especially tender. Although the forest provided some food at this time of the year, they mostly ate chocolate and candy. Even though they were high in calories, there was nothing else they could do in order to fill their stomachs.

The group of seven huddled around the bonfire, fighting for every

ounce of heat and energy. Qin Min and Leng Yun were off to the side speaking to one another. They had known each other before the catastrophe.

Fatty held a slightly scorched piece of baked *Dinichthys* meat. Eating a huge mouthful and laughing he said, "Haha! This stupid fish wanted to eat us, but it ended up getting eaten by us instead!"

Sun Bing smiled good-naturedly and laughed saying, "Really now, I can't believe that we fought and won against that huge monster."

Fatty took off his drenched jacket and let it dry by the fire. His shining, white belly piled up like a mountain. Most women subconsciously stayed far away from him, but Fatty didn't care. His stomach was like a bottomless pit, and in less than ten minutes, he ate several large pieces of meat.

"I'm stuffed!" Fatty contently rubbed his stomach and said, "This meat tastes pretty good! Too bad it wasn't seasoned. Hey boss, why don't you cut off a little bit more? We can take it with us to eat on the road."

Zhang Mu fiddled with his sword by the fire and casually said, "Do you have any common sense? Wouldn't the raw meat rot? Not only are there a countless number of creatures with keen senses of smell inside the forest – not to mention all the mosquitos – but the daytime heat would also cause it to rot in about two days."

Fatty thought about it for a moment, then he agreed with Zhang Mu.

Qin Min took a piece of meat from the fire and passed it over to Liu Yao and Chen Ling, "If you two don't eat then Big Fatty will certainly eat it all."

Chen Ling was thankful and said, "Thank you."

Qin Min smiled and said, "You're welcome. We're partners from here on out."

Chen Ling nodded. Captain Zhang Mu and their deadly battle against the Dinichthys had deeply shocked her. If she hadn't seen it with her own eyes, she wouldn't have believed that such an attractive young man was the same fearless and crazy warrior!

The two men were the new recruits to their small team. Liu Yao was a standard nerd. He was mostly silent and spoke very little as he was bad at communicating. Chen Ling was a white collar businessman. In comparison, he was very smooth and sly, and therefore was relatively better. The two had men experienced a lot of dangerous situations, and even though they had escaped alive, they still hadn't recovered.

Zhang Mu spoke, "Eat and drink your fill then get a good night's rest. Tomorrow, we will proceed forward."

Everyone finished their dinner and went to lie down on their makeshift wooden beds to get some rest. A few moments later, Fatty's snores thundered, and Zhang Mu also entered a light sleep. Besides those two men, everyone else found it hard to fall asleep. It was too dark, damp, and their wooden beds felt extremely uncomfortable. It was actually extremely difficult for them to adapt to such conditions.

The next morning.

Excluding Zhang Mu and Fatty, everyone's appearances seemed somewhat thin and haggard. They hadn't been able to sleep the entire night. After carefully boarding the riverbank, everyone continued to press on northward.

After the rain had passed, the weather became especially sunny and cloudless. Lush foliage blocked the sunlight, but the intense sunlight had been shining on the forest for a long time, causing the forest itself to be like a steamer. They barely walked a few steps before their bodies became drenched in sweat, looking as if they had been drenched in water. Trekking through the jungle was hard work because the lush thicket blocked one's line of sight, making it hard to see the road ahead. In the event that one lacked experience and a cool-headed mind, it was easy for an individual to walk around in circles. One could walk only a mile a day and still get completely lost inside the jungle.

There were many poisonous vipers and even some poisonous plants in the middle of the jungle. Even the slightest mistake would cost them their lives. There were traces of monster activity scattered around the depths of the jungle. There were things like feces, scratch marks, carcass remains, large dead snakeskins, dinosaur footprints, *etc.*

Most of the marks were still fresh, so this wasn't the time, nor hour, to make themselves noticeable. Danger was nearby. In fact, it had never been too far away. Their small team, however, had pretty good luck. After walking for about two hours, excluding a few random monsters, they hadn't come across any real threats.

"Wait a minute." Zhang Mu lifted his right hand, causing the others to

stop nervously.

Fatty tightened his grip on his axe, "Bo...boss? What happened?"

Zhang Mu sniffed and frowned, "Something's wrong in the grove, it's too quiet! It also reeks a little of blood! Qin Min, investigate the surroundings."

Fatty inhaled deeply through his nose and said, "The smell of blood? I can't smell it?"

Zhang Mu had experienced countless blood baptisms, and therefore, he was especially sensitive to the smell of blood.

Qin Min didn't dare to be careless, and immediately called for a small bird to investigate the vicinity. The small bird flew over the front grove before stopping abruptly as a white projectile flew up from within and struck the bird down. The bird whined as it was hit, and dropped dead to the ground.

Qin Min cried out in fear, "The monster was hiding in the underbrush!"

Susu!

They all heard bursts of small sounds coming from the underbrush. They didn't have time to react before a white projectile shot out from the inside. The white projectile landed on Qin Min's body, causing her to let out a mournful shriek as she fell onto the ground. It was a white cobweb net with a reddish tint to it, an evident indication that it was poisonous.

Qin Min was struck in the face, and her smooth skin began to fester and grow blisters.

"Little Min!" Leng Yun and Qin Min were very close, so Leng Yun rushed to her side to support her, "Are you okay?!"

Zhang Mu hurriedly pulled his sword out, holding it in front of him, and loudly shouted, "Sun Bing, defend us!"

Sun Bing raised his shield and stood in front of Qin Min and Leng Yun. The rustling coming from the thicket became louder, and many huge, sinister spiders came out from inside. They all looked like huge, dark-grey wheels, and their eight legs resembled razor-sharp knife blades. The strands of hair on their legs were like sharp, steel needles. Their black, gem-like eyes radiated an ice-cold light. Their mouths were covered in remnants of blood, and it seemed as if they were constantly chewing on something. It truly made one's blood run cold.

【Large Jungle Spider】(Common) , Level 5, 55 health points, 35 mana.

The spiders unceasingly came out from a nearby bush, and in a blink of an eye, several people were surrounded by them. There were about twenty or thirty of them. Their skill was to shoot cobwebs, but the cobweb itself couldn't damage anyone. However, since it was toxic and clung to the target, it made it impossible for the target to move.

Zhang Mu took his sword out, holding it with both hands, and warned, "Be careful of the web attacks!"

They didn't have time to react.

"Ah!"

A blood-curdling scream echoed from behind the team. The scream came from the new recruit, Liu Yao. He was low leveled and had little experience, and so, he was still unable to equip a skill. Therefore, he and Chen Ling were arranged in the back of the small team. Everyone turned their heads back to look, and what they saw made them jump in fright.

Hanging silently from a thick silk thread, a huge red spider grabbed Liu Yao from behind. It held him down with the barbs growing on his legs, a pair of ivory teeth already penetrating the soft skin on his neck, thus making it impossible for him to escape.

Chen Ling screamed and rushed to retreat.

"Damn it!" Fatty angrily stepped forward in order to drive his axe towards the spider, "Do me a favor and die!"

The red spider was obviously an elite monster, as its reaction time was extremely quick, and the axe was unable to damage it. Whoosh! The large spider withdrew its silk thread and immediately climbed ten meters back up onto the branches. Liu Yao's body trailed behind it, weakened, without the strength to resist it. The spider began rapidly moving its eight legs in order to produce a large amount of thin, sticky thread in order to wrap Liu Yao up. After a few mere seconds, the spider had already finished binding Liu Yao and had turned him into an uncanny silk figurine.

Leng Yun summoned an Ice Arrow and shot it towards the spider, hitting the ring-like pattern on its stomach just in the nick of time. It let out a loud scream, and jumped away while holding Liu Yao's silk figurine.

Fatty angrily stamped his foot.

Suddenly, the group of spiders and the large spider started aggressively attacking. As long as someone was within range, they would immediately start spraying poisonous silk threads. Zhang Mu attracted the majority of their firing, and thus had to avoid the paths of the silk threads quite a few times. He used his left hand to throw his dagger, which pierced through a spider's head, and then used Quick Step in order to rush over and stab through the spider's head again, using his Dinichthys' sword.

"Squeak, squeak!" The spider let out a strange screech, and a sticky, smelly black substance bubbled up from its wound. It struggled a few times before it became completely motionless.

Zhang Mu brandished his sword towards another spider, and immediately split it in two. The spiders had extremely weak defense, so it required only one or two of his hits to kill them. Their appearances may be able to frighten people, but their attack power was extremely weak. If they didn't have their annoying silk thread ability, then killing them wouldn't have been hard at all.

Fatty and Sun Bing each stood at opposite sides in order to stop the group of spiders from attacking. Leng Yun's Ice Arrows were capable of quickly killing off the spiders, but the cool down time was too long, so

they couldn't be used too often. After several spiders from the group had died, they stopped attacking and turned around to hide inside the forest.

Zhang Mu ran back and asked, "Are you guys all right?"

Sun Bing's shield was covered in sticky silk threads, and once his petrified status was lifted he said, "I'm okay, but what about the younger brother who was captured by the spider? What do we do?"

Zhang Mu shook his head and said nothing.

Liu Yao was doomed.

Leng Yun shouted out worriedly, "Ah, everyone come quickly! Little Min's condition is really bad!"

Zhang Mu wasn't concerned about Liu Yao's fate. However, Qin Min's ability to investigate was important, thus making her a crucial part to the team, especially since they were now in the very complex and dangerous central jungle realm. They immediately ran over to Qin Min. Qin Min's face was hit by the silk threads, causing it to swell up and fester. Leng Yun basically cured the injury, but Qin Min's eye was poisoned. She had already lost some of her sight, and was now almost blind.

Qin Min shut both of her eyes tightly, and while crying in alarm she shouted, "What do we do? My eyes, my eyes! I can't see!"

Leng Yun used Healing Hand in order to restore some of her health points, but it was useless in trying to cure a disability. At the very least, a

C leveled skill or higher was needed in order cure this kind of poison. In this region, being blind would inevitably lead to one's death.

"Don't be afraid." Zhang Mu bent down and inspected her as he comfortingly said, "It's going to be okay. Your injury isn't very serious. Once you level up, your sight will be restored."

Leng Yun's voice relaxed, and she firmly held onto Qin Min's hand as she said, "It'll be okay, we'll help you level up."

Qin Min also felt a little bit relieved since her experience points had reached 99%. They only had to kill a few more common monsters before she could level up to level 5.

Zhang Mu looked around and said, "It's too dangerous here, we have to leave!"

The group of spiders could return at any time, so Leng Yun healed Sun Bing's and Fatty's injuries. As they made their way down the grove's single pathway, they made sure to steer clear from any spider's touch. After walking for a few hundred meters, they spotted a silk figurine of a person lying on a patch of grass ahead of them.

Fatty spoke in fear, "That... That isn't youngster Liu Yao, is it? How did it get here?"

Sun Bing suddenly started to speak in a low voice, somewhat stuttering as he said, "Cap...Captain, take a look at this..."

Zhang Mu went over to take a look at the area he was referring to, and saw an elite scarlet spider collapsed within a bush not too far away. The spider was cut in half and its purple-red blood sprinkled over the underbrush.

Its head was missing!

Fatty was taken aback, "Damn it! How did this spider die here? Who killed it!"

Zhang Mu suddenly felt his hair stand up on end, and an extremely ominous feeling began to shroud his mind.

Volume 1: Chapter 16 – The Deadly Praying Mantis

The elite spider wasn't a weak monster, but it had unexpectedly been cut cleanly in half. It was collapsed in the middle of the underbrush, yet there seemed to be no signs of a struggle.

Zhang Mu whispered, "Be careful, we have to get out of here."

When their group of five had met the elite spider earlier, it had been angry. The elite spider had carried Liu Yao off less than five minutes ago, which meant that it had recently died. So whatever killed the spider probably hadn't gone very far.

Their surroundings were covered with thick, overgrown grass that was as tall as an average person. No one knew what was hidden inside the tall grass. A burst of wind blew from the south, blowing shrubs and weeds away. The only sounds to be heard were the rustling of leaves and the gurgling of water. The group of six realized that it was quiet, too quiet.

You could hear the howling of the wind and the rustling of the leaves.

You could even hear the sound of birds singing.

For some unexplainable reason, Zhang Mu raised his head and his gaze fell onto a tree nearby. What he saw made his heart suddenly constrict. There was a huge monster on top of the tall tree. Its green body was camouflaged among the trees. It was about one and a half meters wide and more than four meters long. It had a triangular shaped head, and big, shiny compound eyes. On its head were long, slender antennae, and

it had huge forelimbs with sickle shaped blades as shins... This was a praying mantis!

【Deadly Praying Mantis】(Silver Elite) , Level 6, 600 health points, 400 mana,

Attributes: ??, Skills: ??, Description: A Praying Mantis that brings death along its wake!

Were it not for the fact that this 4-meters long Praying Mantis was right there in front of their eyes, nobody would have ever believed that it could grow to such a size!

Such a formidable insect... It was even bigger than a buffalo!

The Deadly Praying Mantis had six spindly legs and two sickle-like forelimbs. Between its forelimbs was a dark object – the Elite Spider's head. Slowly, it began eating the Elite Spider, bit by bit, and before long, the entire head was almost gone. A viscous, bloody liquid dripped from the claws that clutched the head. As it savoured the taste of the Elite Spider, the Deadly Praying Mantis was simultaneously staring coldly at the other six humans beneath it.

Even though the Deadly Praying Mantis was only level 6, it was a Silver Elite monster and thus, its combat ability had far surpassed that of a level 7 Bronze Elite Deinonychus.

The Deadly Praying Mantis was too strong. The worst part was that it was a speed type monster. With the current equipment and abilities of Zhang Mu, he had no chance of handling it. However, precisely because of the fact that the Deadly Praying Mantis was already fond of its current

meal, so it was not interested in the few humans beneath it. So long that they did not agitate the Praying Mantis, it should not assault them. With an unanimous understanding among Zhang Mu and his party, they began creeping backwards in retreat.

"What's wrong guys?!" Qin Min could not see it, and thus, she was not aware of the danger. But at the same time, because she was feeling that the atmosphere was weird, she decided to just ask out loud.

The Deadly Praying Mantis was alarmed by that. Right at that moment, it lifted its head and turned towards the group of humans with its black beady eyes, looking at them with murderous intent.

"This is bad! Quick! Run!" Zhang Mu exclaimed.

Suddenly, the Deadly Praying Mantis opened its wings, and like a green shadow, began rushing towards Zhang Mu's party.

Without hesitating, Zhang Mu dropped down onto the ground. He could feel the fierce winds roaring by his head, cutting off a cluster of his hair.

The Praying Mantis' green sickle forearms slashed out at Sun Bing. Fortunately, he reacted in time, raising up his shield to defend himself from the slash. 'BOOM!' The force behind the slash hurled Sun Bing a few meters away, causing him to hit a nearby tree and making his shield ricochet a dozen metres away. On the shield was a very deep mark left behind by the slash.

Sun Bing groaned out in pain as he held onto his bloodied right arm. Due to his poor physical condition, the blunt force trauma have him an arm fracture. But it was fortunate that Sun Bing was the one attacked by the Praying Mantis. Indubitably, if it was someone else who got slashed by the Mantis, the only outcome anyone could fathom was death.

Fatty was taken aback by what he saw. He slowly retreated backwards, hoping that there wouldn't be a need for him to confront the Praying Mantis.

Chen Ling was so frightened by the scene that she hid herself within the nearby bush .

The Deadly Praying Mantis turned towards Leng Yun and Qin Min – Leng Yun because she tried to protect Qin Min and as a result, could not retreat fast enough.

At that moment, when Zhang Mu stood up, he saw the Deadly Praying Mantis had raised up one of its sickle-like forearms. He rushed with great haste towards the Mantis and at the same time, exclaimed, "Be careful! The Mantis is going to use its skill! Dodge!"

But it was too late.

The Deadly Praying Mantis slashed out an air blade that could not be seen with naked eyes. Almost everything in front of it was cut in half. Leng Yun and Qin Min were hit by the air blade, causing their blood to burst out, before falling down onto the ground.

"Damn it!"

Zhang Mu shouted, before throwing his strength into using the Dinichthys' Sword to slash the back of the Praying Mantis. The attack and speed of the Deadly Praying Mantis was frightening to a certain extent. However, compared to its defense, then it sufficed to say, its defense could only be considered as average. He was only about to inflict 31 points of damage. He pierced towards the abdomen of the Mantis with the dagger in his other hand simultaneously. Due to the fact that Zhang Mu used his <Assassination> skill, the speed he displayed was so fast that the Mantis could not evade in time. Thus, wounding it.

With a piercing scream, the Deadly Praying Mantis was immediately angered. In a flash, it came towards Zhang Mu. Zhang Mu retreated half a step, just barely dodging the sickle-like forearms. But the sharp winds inflicted 17 points of damage! It was fortunate that he was wearing armour. Being a level 5 ranger, Zhang Mu only had a total of 60 health points. Coupled with his equipment, his total health was able to reach 75 health points. With the small amount of damage from the sharp winds of the Mantis' slash, he was already inflicted with 17 points of damage. Such fierce attack power was quite extraordinary.

Zhang Mu stooped over to avoid the incoming sickle of the Mantis. Utilising that decisive moment, he rushed forward, slashing the Dinichthys' Sword right at the Praying Mantis, causing a deep wound to be inflicted. Without a pause, the dagger on his left hand went forward to stab at the Mantis but his combo was broken. With a sickle sweep from the Mantis, Zhang Mu's dagger went flying away. He was hurt. Due to the impact, his left hand was almost totally fractured...

From afar, there appeared a crystallization sound. An ice arrow came flying forward, striking the back of the Mantis and inflicted 45 damage

points!

Looking at the arrow that flew over, Zhang Mu felt a little reprieved. Leng Yun did not die!

The Praying Mantis was inflicted with the cold damage, causing its movement to slow down tremendously. Furiously, it turned towards Leng Yun's direction. Leng Yun had a pale expression. The Fish Bone Staff in her hands was smeared with blood. She was obviously injured, yet that did not diminish her fury towards the Praying Mantis... Qin Min though did not stand up.

Fatty became enraged witnessing that scene. He bellowed, "This fatty will fight with you to the death!"

When the Deadly Praying Mantis was about to fly off, Fatty used his <Brutal Charge>, charging towards the Mantis and causing it to go on a daze. With the axe on his hand, he hacked off one of the Mantis' legs. This caused the Mantis to come out of its stupor, and with a shrill, it raised its sickle-like forearms and prepared to cut Fatty into two.

Sun Bing picked up his shield and cast the skill <Taunt>. "Look over here you stupid insect!"

The Mantis turned and slashed out an air blade towards Sun Bing. Even though Sun Bing was prepared for the attack, he could still not block the tremendous impact from the Mantis. Inevitably, he flew off from the force created, crashing against the ground with a body coated in blood. Fatty was prepared to charge out a second time, yet with a strike from the Mantis, Fatty flew away screaming.

The Deadly Praying Mantis had 70% of its health left. When it was about to rush towards Sun Bing, Zhang Mu picked up his dagger, and with a roar, attracted the Mantis' attention. With a rush, he went in between Sun Bing and the Mantis, facing it determinedly.

"Zhiii — !"

As they confronted each other, the tall Mantis stared down at Zhang Mu. With both of its sickle-like forearms raised up, it slashed right towards him. If the two slashes hit, there is no doubt Zhang Mu would be left in three pieces.

Zhang Mu stood his ground without moving. Right at the moment when the Mantis was about to slash out, he used <God's Blessing>, creating a period of invulnerability. Thus when the slash hit, he was not hurt at all. Instead, Zhang Mu used that opportunity to bash against the Mantis, staggering it. Without hesitation, Zhang Mu jumped with all his strength and performed a dual-wielded backhanded slash aimed at the weakness of the Mantis: the eyes.

Regardless of what creature it was, their eyes were always the most vulnerable point.

Two swords, one long and one short were stabbed in the Mantis' eyes. This time, Zhang Mu inflicted a huge damage, dropping the previously 70% health down to 30%. With a scream, the mantis retreated and began slashing frantically. Without its sight, it could not see where Zhang Mu was.

This was an opportunity for Zhang Mu. He took both of his swords (One sword, one dagger), flanked the Mantis whilst dodging the slashes, and hacked away.

"Hiss-!!"

The Deadly Praying Mantis was blinded, yet it could determine the relative position of where Zhang Mu was. Instantly it slashed out its sickle-like forearms towards Zhang Mu. In response, Zhang Mu drew his two-wielded sword in front of him to block that attack, retreating about six or seven steps backwards before he regained stability.

Right at this juncture, with a body bathed in blood, Fatty came charging over with a warcry, "Kill!" With the axe, he hacked downwards at the joint between the Mantis' head and its body. This joint was one of the smallest part of the Mantis, and the most fragile, his attack resulted in a huge wound, leaving it with only 15% health left.

Leng Yun cast an arrow of ice and inflicted 43 damage points!

The Deadly Praying Mantis only had 8% health left.

Zhang Mu and Fatty joined forces, throwing out a flurry of attacks at the Mantis. 'Bam!' The Deadly Praying Mantis fell over onto the ground, dead.

As it died three items appeared – a skill book, an emerald sword, and an emerald ring, along with dozens of gold pieces.

Zhang Mu, Leng Yun, Sun Bing and Fatty shared the experiences equally, filling up to 18% of their current bar.

"How is Qin Min?"

Zhang Mu did not even take a single glance at the items on the floor, before rushing over to check on the situation with Qin Min.

Qin Min was in a pool of blood. Her abdomen was cut in half, with her viscera hanging out. There were several intestines and organs that were too hacked apart. Yet, she had not given her last breath. Her mouth was wide open and her pupils were enlarged.

Leng Yun screamed in anguish, "Didn't we just kill the monster recently?! Why... Why did she not level up?!"

Qin Min's health points had hit zero. Even though her body did not die, according to the system, she was dead.

Zhang Mu looked at Leng Yun, before shaking his head.

Leng Yun's eyes turned moist. She gingerly placed Qin Min over her arms, shaking her.

"Little Min, don't be afraid. We are all here..."

Qin Min's lip was trembling. "Leng Yun sister... I... I am feeling really, really cold..."

Leng Yun could no longer control her sorrow. Tears began dripping down her face. Fatty and Sun Bing were supporting each other as they walked over. Looking at Qin Min's condition, they were stupefied.

Zhang Mu stooped over towards Leng Yun and Qin Min. "I am sorry."

"No... Captain Mu Tou ..." Qin Min weakly said. A trail of blood spilled out from the sides of her mouth. "You are... You are a great person! You... are very strong... I believe... You will become... a great leader... I really wish... wish I could go with you. To see the world... But regrettably..."

Qin Min continued, "Leng Yun sister... don't be sad. I was afraid... afraid of dying... Yet now, ... not any more. It was because ... I could make friends with all of you. I... I am satisfied. Captain Mu Tou... You guys must live on!"

She did not have much time left.

"Alright. Don't talk anymore." Zhang Mu grabbed hold of the ice-cold hands of Qin Min, using the most gentle voice possible to ask her, "Do you have any unfulfilled wishes?"

"Wishes? Well... If it is possible... I hope Captain Mu Tou could protect my sister... my father.. and my mother if you... see them." Qin Min sobbed out. "I really wish I could see them once more... Really really wish I could..."

Slowly, her voice became softer and softer, and before long, it disappeared.

"Alright. Don't worry, Qin Min. We will fulfil your wish." Zhang Mu covered her eyes.

Leng Yun was tightly hugging Qin Min's body. Such a strong woman, yet she was weeping. Sun Bing's eyes were both red from sadness. After so many days of battle together, she was definitely one of their comrades. Even the playful and big-sized Fatty could not hold his tears any longer.

"Damn this! That damnable insect!"

Fatty cursed out without regards to his injuries. He went forward to the Mantis' body, hacking and slashing indignantly until it became pieces.

Zhang Mu was quiet. He was not a cold and emotionless person. He was already accustomed to the death of his comrades.. He quietly gazed over Leng Yun, Fatty and Sun Bing.

This was not a fairy tale.

The death of comrades was something that was unavoidable.

This was the first time seeing death for the three of them. It was better that they experienced it sooner rather than later.

Such a cruel world... Yet it was this harshness that allowed man to metamorphosize. It was this viciousness that allowed man to grow up. It was this brutality that allowed man to become stronger.

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The bloody battle came at a great cost. Scout Qin Min had died. Several of the key players within the party were injured.

Sun Bing had several fractures and internal injuries. Even now, he was still puking blood.

Fatty's abdomen had a deep laceration. Even though it was not fatal, his leather armour was damaged, showing the thick fat underneath. He was trying his best to stop the blood from flowing out of the laceration. However, it just kept on pouring out, causing his entire body to be stained red with blood. If an ordinary person were to see him as he is now, they would think that Fatty was an extremely fierce individual.

It was fortunate that Leng Yun managed to survive against the Mantis' air blade. Even though she was struck by it, most of the damage had been inflicted onto Qin Min instead. Thus, her overall injury was relatively light compared to the everyone else.

As for Zhang Mu, he had the lightest injury within the party. The Black Leather Armor he was wearing was damaged. There was a 0.3-meter long cut with blood dripping out from it. He had also sprained his wrists from the battle before.

Leng Yun started healing everyone using the health potions they had while Zhang Mu also brought out the health potions that were found in the treasure chest underwater. It was only after exhausting their supply of

potions that the condition of the party stabilised.

Zhang Mu checked the items the Mantis dropped.

【FF rank Skill Book, Summon Deadly Praying Mantis】 Requirements:
Spirit 30, Class restriction: Summoner.

【Blade of the Jungle】(Superior Black Iron) , Level 5 two-handed weapon
, Attack + 24, Sharpness + 5, Attack Speed + 5% , Durability: 20/20.

【Piercing Wind Iron Ring】(Superior Black Iron), Level 5 Magic Ring,
Attack distance + 0.5 metres, Attack Speed + 5%, Wind elemental
damage + 8, Durability: 20/20.

A Summoner's skill book!

An extremely precious and rare Summoner's skill book!

Everyone was feeling bitter after seeing what the item was.

Such a pity!

If only Qin Min was still alive, this skill book would definitely be hers.
Everyone could see that if the Deadly Praying Mantis was summoned, it
could be a huge help with its destructive attacking potential.

It was really such a pity...!

Leng Yun took out a blood-stained card. "This was what I found from her stash of precious items. I think it is Qin Min's sister."

Zhang Mu wiped away the blood on the surface of the card and discovered it was a photograph of Qin Min and a girl. The girl looked unique – delicate and beautiful. "En. If I were to ever see her, I would definitely commit myself to such a beauty!"

Suddenly a person came out from a nearby shrub. It was Chen Ling. As she took in the sight of the bloodied and bruised, she felt remorseful at Qin Min's death. "I'm really sorry... I... I was so afraid, that's why..."

Chen Ling was only level 4. All she had in her arsenal was the escape skill **【Rush Level 1】**. Coupled with no equipment, no skills, and a meek character unlike that of Leng Yun's strong character, nor that of Fatty's daredevil's fierceness. When met with such a dangerous and powerful monster – the Deadly Praying Mantis, her first reaction was to run.

When everyone was putting their lives at risk for survival, Chen Ling had actually hidden herself. Even though she was not to be blamed everyone still felt a little resentment towards her.

Zhang Mu shook his head. "Nevermind. Let this battle serve as experience. After all, we are all part of a team. I hope that this will not happen again."

Chen Ling hurriedly answered, "Yes... I promise that it will never happen again. Sorry."

Zhang Mu requested Fatty to pass to her the two-handed axe. Chen Ling's class was a Swordsman after all. The Swordsman class is very versatile, just like the Ranger class. Both classes could equip a huge range of weapons. Though the two-handed axe was a type of equipment that a Ranger could not use, it was something a Swordsman could.

Of course, Fatty had a new weapon – **【Blade of the Jungle】**. Thus he was willing to pass the two-handed axe to Chen Ling. This two-handed Great Sword had the length of four feet, three fingers wide and was emerald-green throughout. It was extremely sharp, with an attack power of 24. This allowed Fatty's attacking power to raise an entire level.

The Deadly Praying Mantis' dropped items included an accessory – **【Piercing Wind Iron Ring】**. It was actually a Magic Ring with a value that was worth much higher than the **【Blade of the Jungle】**. The reason behind its worth was not because of the strong attacking power boost, but it was due to its special effects and properties.

With the **【Piercing Wind Iron Ring】** equipped, Zhang Mu could feel the special imburement of the properties provided. Swinging his sword lightly, there was an almost imperceptible pale-green glow following in its trail. Even when the sword did not touch the wild grass in front of him, a small patch of grass was cut. This was the Wind Elemental effect brought by the ring, which allowed the power of any weapon to increase by a few grades.

With the rarity of a Summoner's skill book, its value would definitely be a few times higher than the skill book of any other classes. Although it was a pity that Qin Min died prematurely, once they reach camp, this skill book could still be sold for quite a great deal of gold.

Zhang Mu put the skill book into his bag.

Everyone in the party wanted to bury Qin Min's body as a form of respect. However, they did not have any equipment for that purpose. Furthermore, the significance of such a burial would not be huge for Qin Min. After all, within this jungle, there were certainly creatures with a superior sense of smell and could easily discover Qin Min's corpse within moments. Thus, listening to Zhang Mu's advice, they placed a few layers of soil onto Qin Min, covered her with several leaves before ending the 'burial'.

Pointing to the few human-shaped figurines, Fatty asked, "What should we do with these?"

When Liu Yao was captured by the spiders, he was poisoned by their venom and wrapped into a cocoon. The chances of him being alive after such a long period of time is zilch. For the sake of confirmation, Fatty used his sword to cut open the web. Yet what they saw shocked their hearts as it brought forth a wave of disgust, inducing in them the urge to puke.

There were blisters all over Liu Yao's body. A huge part of it was already rotten away. Pus was coming out from some of the blisters, causing his body to look like some puffed up monster. His organs and bones were already decomposed entirely.

He could be akin to that of a rotten creature.

That stench coming from his corpse, was one of a kind. In the next second, Fatty fainted.

The party of five threw the corpse into the shrub and went off on their journey towards the Dawn Camp.

.....

Without Qin Min, they had no one scouting for them any longer. As a result, the five of them could only dash forward blindly, hoping that they would not get into serious danger.

Zhang Mu was leading the group with the responsibility to ensure the group's safety.

Chen Ling was behind him. She was only a level 4 Swordsman. Now that she had a weapon, her attacking power was much stronger than before. Following her was Leng Yun with her staff. As an Elemental Mage, she was the weakest in terms of defence. But if we were to talk about her attacking power? With just the Ice-arrow spell, no ordinary monsters could be a threat to her at all. Finally, Fatty was in the back.

They had not walked for a long distance, before a whiff of stench came in their direction. Frowning, Zhang Mu alerted the rest. "Something smells fishy. Please be careful."

After crossing over the large jungle, the group now thought that they would be safer. After all, facing the Mantis, what would be worse? Yet what they saw was even more shocking. In front of them, was yet another wide piece of jungle, with a catch – it was decorated with webs all around. Their road ahead was blocked by webs, with a huge amount of spider eggs within.

The five of them went through piles and piles of webs, before reaching a depressed area. Within it, there were hundreds of cocoons hanging down from the branches of trees. They were web-bounded organisms with at least a dozen of them being humans. Right at the bottom of the web-wound cocoons were holes, showing that a large creature had actually bitten through them. Viscous red liquids dripped right into the depression below. It was an amalgamation of flesh and blood.

Three red-spiders and seven or eight black-spiders were busily consuming the flesh of their preys.

This was actually the origin of the Jungle spider, the spider's' nest.

Zhang Mu frowned. "These spiders are not that threatening to us. However, it is extremely troublesome to deal with them. Let's skirt around the whole area, and avoid provoking them."

Unfortunately, the spiders saw them. 'Ge ge ge' Countless small white spiders came crawling out of the gap in between the webs. They were just like the tide of waves, coming unto the group constantly. They were about the size of a human's head, being [Level 2, Ordinary] monsters. Although their individual worth was not that great, their vast numbers covered up that weakness. It was a spectacular sight, watching this horde of spiders rushing towards them.

"Escape!"

Yet before they could even escape from the area, spiders came dropping down from the trees above. Some of these spiders had actually

dropped onto the group of five. Leng Yun and Chen Ling were women, and thus, they clearly had some terror towards the spiders. By the time the spiders reached them, they had lost all composure, hurriedly swiped the spiders away from them.

Sun Bing activated his skill [Hardened Skin]. "You guys run first! I'll delay the spiders!"

He single-handedly attracted a large amount of spiders. Due to the weak attacking power of the small white spiders, they were unable to penetrate the great defense of a Knight. So long as Sun Bing protected his eyes and nose well, there would be no threat to his life at all.

Nobody in the right mind would want to battle these small and disgusting white creatures. Under the cover of Sun Bing, the group escaped from the vicinity rapidly. If it was just the small spiders assaulting them, it did not matter that much. However, what if the group of assaulting spiders were instead comprised of ones bigger than the Elite Spiders they faced earlier on? That would be a situation nobody in the group wanted to face.

This escape of theirs took over two hours of non-stop running. The further they ran, the thicker the forest became. The surroundings were filled with thick roots of tall, colossal trees. Vines and thorns were rampant within the jungle. This reduced their speed and sapped their energy away. Even an extraordinary physical martial artist would become fatigued after crossing through such an environment.

"This young master hates spiders to the core!" Fatty was entirely out of breath from running. He took up a bottle in his hand, and poured it over his mouth, yet not even a single drop of water could be seen. Grimacing,

he said, "Boss! Is there a water source in the vicinity? I'm going to die from thirst."

"We have to reach a safe point away from the spiders first. There's no choice but to endure a little longer. Once we escape from the forest and into the jungle, it will be quite easy to find sources of water." Zhang Mu said, while he stopped to catch his breath. He looked at the surroundings, before determining the next direction they would be heading towards. "Let's follow the lower path."

A few hours of trekking in the forest caused their water source to deplete entirely. Due to the humidity and heat, the group of five were so thirsty that they felt like dying – Zhang Mu included.

After another half an hour of trekking, they finally found a large area of wetlands. There was an abundance of reeds all around, with large pieces of land submerged by swamps.

There were practically no trees covering their sight up ahead towards the sky. Feeling a breeze, the group felt some sort of tranquility with nature.

Several big birds were seen overhead, flying towards the wetlands, before emerging with fishes within their beaks.

Fatty saw his life-saviour. "Water...! There's water!"

"Wait!" Zhang Mu held onto the reckless Fatty. "Don't rush. Let's observe the situation first."

As the group came closer to the water, they instantly saw a few 3-4 metres long crocodile. They were just [Level 5, Ordinary] creatures. With the prowess of the group, they easily killed the crocodiles, before treating these creatures as their lunch.

"This water is not drinkable." Zhang Mu observed the water, and saw the countless particles suspended within. There was red-toxic algae growing within the water, and large numbers of insects visible to the naked eyes. "Follow me."

Placing the crocodile on his shoulder, Fatty followed Zhang Mu upstream. There were huge areas of swampland ahead. Choosing a single location carefully, Zhang Mu then dug out a hole. Before long, water began seeping into it. Even though the water was dirty, all the toxic particulates were already filtered through by the soil. Only with this kind of water source could allow anyone to drink peacefully.

In a moment, the group of thirsty humans did not care much about how dirty the water was. They knelt to the ground, consuming the water filled with mud and refilled their bottles to the brim. Only then did they sit down onto the shore of the wetlands, started a fire, before enjoying their lunch for the day.

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Both crocodiles were skinned and the leather was placed on top of a stone to dry under the sun. As for the crocodile meat, they barbequed it on top of the bonfire. It only took a moment for the fragrance to be produced. The crocodile meat was chewy, as its fat content was half that of beef, which also increased its taste and texture many times over.

Those two 3-meter long crocodiles could only fill the stomachs of five people.

Leng Yun was currently feeling down, as the thought of Qin Min inevitably entered her mind. Just yesterday, they were having fun together and enjoying each other's company over a meal. Yet, her life had been forever extinguished from the world in the blink of an eye. Those who had never encountered this sort of feeling before would forever have it engraved in their souls. Leng Yun wanted to believe that her good friend Qin Min was still alive, but it was just denial on her part.

She was not prepared for such a drastic change in her life.

Zhang Mu handed her a piece of skewered crocodile meat . "Don't dwell on it too much. You need to eat so you'll have the energy to battle later"

"I understand." Leng Yun nodded her head, before taking the skewer. The crocodile meat had been cooked close to perfection. It was slightly crispy on the outsider, yet the meat was so tender on the inside that every bite would ooze juice. Leng Yun took a bite, and even though the crocodile meat was kind of tough – the crocodile being old – it suited her

just fine.

Sun Bing remarked, "This wetland is actually so big... I doubt trying to get across will be an easy feat."

Fatty agreed. "Yes. There's swamp everywhere. It will be very taxing for us to walk across it."

"Unless we're going to skirt by the entire swamp?" Chen Ling asked softly. She was observing the surroundings. "It would take us at least one or two days to go around it..."

Zhang Mu, answered everyone's questions with just one statement, "There are plenty of methods we can use. Don't worry about it too much."

After finishing the crocodile meat, it was time for them to continue their journey. The crocodile skins had almost completely dried up due to the afternoon sun. Zhang Mu cut the skins into long strips, and asked the rest of the group to gather reeds. After a while, a huge pile of reeds was stacked in front of them.

"Boss, what's the use for gathering so many reeds?" Fatty asked. "It's not like we can eat them..."

Zhang Mu took a piece of reed, and easily broke it in two. "By nature, one of the characteristics of a reed is its lightness. Another is its internal air pockets which make it buoyant. We can utilise these reeds to build a raft for us to sail across the marsh. This would definitely be a much better choice than trying to pass through it."

Leng Yun brightened up at that. "Good idea!"

Fatty, however, was still kind of worried. "What if a crocodile ambushes us?"

Zhang Mu shook his head. "By nature, this area of wetlands does not hold too much water. It was because of the rain yesterday night that the entire wetlands became submerged in water. There won't be any big water creatures hiding within the water. Still, it pays to be a little careful. There might still be amphibian type creatures like crocodiles around the area."

"That's good. That's good," Fatty replied happily.

The group continued to make their rafts. They tied together the reeds they had stockpiled with a tough and strong rope, and made two rafts for them to sail on. The leftover reeds were crafted into a sort of lifebuoy devices, in case anyone fell into the marsh.

They found five long bamboo shoots to use as paddles. The group of five then pushed the rafts into the marsh. Leng Yun, Chen Ling and Sun Bing were in one raft, while Fatty shared a raft with Zhang Mu, because he was as fat as two people put together.

It was time to set off.

Zhang Mu rowed ahead with the bamboo paddle. Due to the heavy rain the previous night the swamp was filled with black particles. This gave

the illusion that the swamp was deep, although it actually was half a meter in depth, at most. Thick mud bogged beneath the surface. Every time a bamboo paddle entered into the swamp huge bubbles would froth out, releasing a foul odor akin to that of a septic tank.

This was methane produced from the plants in the environment. It was poisonous to humans. The moment someone fell into the swamp would be the moment they died.

The five of them kept their fingers crossed as they traversed through the swamp. There was a change in the terrain after once they had travelled for about 600-700 meters. The depth of the swamp became even deeper. They were surrounded by layers and layers of reeds that were at least 2 meters in height. There were flowers beside the layers of reeds. Every time there was a breeze they could feel the ripples on the water's surface and the slow swaying of the reeds. They were surrounded by nature in its true glory.

The birds were flying peacefully in the blue skies. The warm breeze made ripples under the bright and majestic sun. It was such a beautiful scene... worthy of being called an art!

Yet nobody was appreciating it!

The group was only thinking one thing – to get out of the wetlands as fast as they could.

Such a place gave people a feeling of terror. Whether or not the rafts would suddenly topple over was a recurring question. After having stayed on high alert for over ten minutes, the group was praying hard,

'Please let there be no accidents.' Yet fate was always a bitch.

The situation that they had hoped to avoid, was going to happen.

When the two rafts entered an extraordinary big field of reeds, a 'Ga ga' sound could be heard.

Zhang Mu raised his hands to signal the group to stay still. Everyone was nervously looking forward towards the field of reeds.

Sun Bing asked softly, "What happened?"

"There is something up ahead. Let's take a different route."

Leng Yun's heart started palpitating. They were on a raft in a swamp with an unknown depth. The distance to the other side of the bank was over a thousand meters.

The consequences would be dire if they were to be assaulted at this point in time.

Everyone tried their best to observe what was up ahead within the field of reeds. However due to the reeds being too tall, they could see nothing at all. Still, nobody within the group doubted what Zhang Mu had said. They were preparing to head towards another direction. At this moment, a sound was heard from within the field of reeds, as if something was trying to cut across the field. Based on the huge movement of the reeds falling in groups, that something would be huge.

Cold sweat formed on Fatty's face. "Damn... What exactly is that thing?"

Ever so slowly that 'thing' came closer towards the group. Even more reeds were being flattened in its path. Closer... And closer...

Sun Bing readied his shield, "It's coming out!"

The reeds close to them began falling apart. That 'thing' was going to tunnel out through the field. Yet something strange happened within the next second. The sound within the field of reeds disappeared. The five of them had already prepared themselves for the battle ahead. They became puzzled as nothing came out from the field.

Chen Ling held her axe nervously, "This... Why did it suddenly vanish?"

Grunt!

Amidst the swamp water, huge bubbles started effervescent.

Zhang Mu's pupils dilated. He shouted, "Be carefull! It's underwater!"

Peng!

The surface of the swamp water broke apart, revealing a 13-14 meter long huge python. Its body was white in colour with a cyclic pattern. The triangular-shaped head glared at the five of them. It was about 4 stories high, with a body thicker than any man. It was an unprecedented huge

python! Or so they thought.

【Swamp Anaconda】(Bronze Elite) , Level 8, 600 Health Points , 300 mana , Attributes: ??, Skills: ??, Description: An extremely brutal anaconda. Due to the effects of powerful evil energy, it has become even more powerful.

Fatty shouted, "Fuck this! I knew this would happen!"

The Swamp Anaconda was extremely fast. The group could not react in time when it moved. A crushing force came right at them. When the Anaconda swung its tail, their rafts were instantly destroyed, landing them into the swamp. Every movement they made released methane from underneath. It was so foul that they felt dizzy from just smelling it. The swamp mud they were in was just like chilli powder – it prevented their eyes from opening.

"Damn this! I hate water!" Fatty did not know how to swim. He was just like a big fat pig falling into the sea, frantically screaming out, "Where in the world did such a big snake come from?!"

This was an anaconda. A boa and a python were not that different in their fundamental characteristics. A boa hatched eggs inside its body and then gave birth (ovoviparous), while a python laid eggs in a nest. Due to nature, huge snakes generally did not have poison. However, they were extremely fast. It could also be fatal if one were to be constricted by a snake.

Zhang Mu gasped as he surfaced. He saw that he was at some distance from the rest of the group. The anaconda had already thoroughly

destroyed their rafts. Bits and pieces were falling everywhere. Fortunately the five of them had a lifebuoy device with them. This allowed them to float above the swamp. However, they could not breathe properly because their entire faces were covered with mud.

The gigantic Anaconda raised its body up 4 stories high, twisting into a dangerous 'S' shape as it prepared for the assault. This species of snake would immediately wrap itself around its target and thoroughly break their victim's bones. What was worse, the swamp's current environment meant that an attack would be instant death.

With their lives hanging by a thread, any ordinary person would have panicked. Yet Zhang Mu was still calmly observing the situation. The moment he found a small hope of survival, he immediately shouted out, "The reeds! That field of reeds! Let's hurry there! Since the field is able to withstand the weight of the anaconda, then it will definitely withstand ours!"

After hearing this the four of them felt as if a life-saving straw had been given to them. Within the swamp, there would be no chance of victory against the Anaconda. However, if they were to battle against it on land, they would at least have a slight chance of winning the fight. Since the field was able to hold up a gigantic boa of 300 kilograms, they would also be able to step on them as if on land.

Leng Yun raised her staff, immediately casting an Ice Arrow towards the Anaconda and inflicted 45 damage. The damage in this case was secondary. It was the slow condition brought about by the Cold-elemental damage that would allow them a chance at surviving this battle. Sun Bing pulled Fatty as they strived towards the field of reeds. Chen Ling followed closely behind them.

"Si Si!"

The Anaconda became furious once it was struck by the ice arrow. It immediately turned its head towards Leng Yun and struck her.

Sun Bing and Fatty immediately climbed onto the reeds after finally having reached them. With a turn of his head, Sun Bing saw that the Swamp Anaconda was about to strike Leng Yun. He instantly cast his spell <Taunt>, and successfully attracted the attention of the furious Anaconda. When the Anaconda glared at Sun Bing, he could feel his soul leaving his body. Without hesitation, he immediately turned tail and ran deeper into the field.

Zhang Mu's assumption was perfectly right. The entire swamp within the field had became land because of the accumulated mud beneath the reeds. Still, this bit of land was not perfect. When Sun Bing ran he could feel the unevenness of the surface, some parts being deeper than others. Nonetheless, battling on such a terrain was many times better than battling within the swamp itself.

The Anaconda's speed was extremely fast. It charged towards Sun Bing as if it was a Flood Dragon. Sun Bing immediately started panicking. The moment he took his next step, he knew he was gone. He had actually stepped into one of the swampy areas, causing half his body to fall into the swamp. The gigantic Anaconda immediately slithered its way towards Sun Bing, constricting him with intent to kill.

Sun Bing utilised his defensive technique <Hardened Skin> without delay. It was this technique that allowed him to survive against the

constriction of the anaconda. Finally, Zhang Mu had reached the field of reeds as well. However, he was still over 10 meters away from Sun Bing, preventing him from helping him.

Looking at the situation, Fatty roared out and enveloped himself with red energy through his technique of <Brutal Charge>. He charged towards the Anaconda and inflicted 44 points of damage. Due to the momentum of his charge the snake was knocked over. Fatty hacked with his Sword of the Jungle without delay. With a high attacking power of [+24 attack] and an immense strength, he was able to incur huge damage on the boa, inflicting 32 damage on it. This hack of his was able to cut apart the tough scales of the Anaconda.

The Swamp Anaconda screamed in pain. It swung its tail and smacked Fatty's chest.

Even though the anaconda's maneuver looked simple, there was terrible strength hidden within this strike.. With a weight of over 125 kilograms, Fatty was thrown across the entire field of reeds as if he weighed nothing.

"Fatty!"

Zhang Mu was startled and quickly reached out towards Fatty.

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Fatty struggled to free himself from the mud, and finally wrenched his head out. There was mud all over his face, and his nose and mouth were filled with rotting weeds. He spat a few mouthfuls, expelling a gross mixture of blood and mud. "Boss, I'm okay! Hurry up and deal with it!"

Knowing that Fatty had avoided death, Zhang Mu sighed a breath of relief. He drew his sword and rushed towards the Anaconda.

Sun Bing's situation was very dangerous. The Anaconda tightly constricted around his body. A Suddenly, kaka sound of the bones cracking began coming from him, and his Health Points were suddenly reduced by half. At this critical juncture, Zhang Mu jumped onto the Anaconda and skidded along its slimy body. With the soft green glow of his sword, he fiercely pierced it at a point seven inches away from the snake's head. He successfully made a huge wound, blood gushing out continuously from it.

The Anaconda howled in pain as its Health Points immediately plunged by the hundreds. Immediately the Anaconda released Sun Bing, twisted its body and flinged Zhang Mu away.

At this time Chen Ling mustered up her courage and hacked right at the tail of the Anaconda with her axe. However she could just barely cut open the Anaconda's scales, causing damage of less than 10 points, because her attack power was not high enough. With another flick of its tail, Chen Ling was tossed away.

"Hiss! Hiss!"

Zhang Mu had become the primary target of the Anaconda after he had considerably damaged his health. Because the distance between them was too close, there was no way for Zhang Mu to dodge the attack. He had to use the skill【God's Blessing】to block the Anaconda's attack. With this he created an opportunity for himself, immediately striking back with his dual-wield swords at the Anaconda's triangular head. The Dinichthys' Sword had great sharpness and attacking power, while the fine iron dagger had much lower attacking power. Zhang Mu's Strength attribute was not high enough to cause a lot of damage. If Zhang Mu didn't have an equipped ring, perhaps even the fats of the Anaconda wouldn't be broken through.

The Anaconda's continuous attacks were parried off by that godly invulnerable light of Zhang Mu's skill. Zhang Mu took this chance to slash right at the Anaconda, yet he could only shave off about 50-60 of the Anaconda's total Health Points. At the time when his invulnerability ended, Zhang Mu immediately turned tail to leave. The snake, however, was too fast, and with a sweep of its tail it whipped Zhang Mu right into the field of reeds.

"-45!"

Such a terrifying damage!

Fortunately, he had his Leather armour. Else, with this one attack, he would have definitely died!

Were it a battle on land, Zhang Mu would definitely not be frightened. However, it was going to be a hard fight with the current terrain.

Especially so when there was no solid ground. When he landed, Zhang Mu fell right into the swamp, as the field of reeds was growing on mud. Only his head stayed above water. The water plants and reeds suddenly entangled around him due to the sudden force of the landing. It was as if there was some water spirit waiting for this moment to find another body to possess.

"Damn!"

Zhang Mu struggled a few times, yet there was no way to break free. The Anaconda came right at him. Without waiting, he took a deep breath and dived into the mud, making the Anaconda bite into an empty space. The snake became furious at the miss. Just when the Anaconda was about to enter the water in chase of its target, an Ice Arrow came flying over, hitting its head and causing a staggering effect.

Leng Yun was simultaneously healing Fatty and using her staff to attack the Anaconda.

"Hiss -!"

Right when the Anaconda turned over towards Leng Yun

Fatty was ready – Brutal Charge!

Boom!

During this violent clash a huge area of the reed field caved in once again. With Fatty's charge and his sword attack that caused 38 damage,

the Anaconda was finally dying! Without waiting, the Anaconda immediately whipped at Fatty with its tail, before deciding to retreat from the battle. At that moment when it was about to escape, a sword suddenly shot up from underneath the water, stabbing right at the Anaconda's less protected area – its abdomen. This attack was the last straw that finally broke the camel's back. With a final hiss, the Anaconda fell down with all its weight.

The Swamp Anaconda dropped two items.

Fatty once again climbed up onto the field of reeds. While lying on the ground, coughing and sneezing out a mixture of blood and mud, he cursed, "This really is a hellish place. It's creeping with vicious things everywhere ! Hey grandma, quickly give me some Health!"

Leng Yun frowned, "I'm out of mana, I cannot heal you anymore."

"What?" Fatty clutched his chest painfully, "I only got half of my Health left yet you can't nurse me back to full health? How can you even be a Nanny?!! Ah, this is so painful that I'm going to die! Boss, save me!"

On the other side, Sun Bing and Chen Ling finally managed to pull Zhang Mu up from the swamp. Currently, the five of them were covered from head to toe with a sticky stench of mud. It was really depressing. Leng Yun's mana was entirely consumed the moment she cast a single Ice Arrow.

Within the team, Fatty and Sun Bing were the only two with heavy injuries. Fatty had suffered from a solid tail strike under the full strength of the Anaconda. Many of his bones were broken, some even causing

internal damage to his organs. He kept vomiting blood due to the heavy internal injuries. Sun Bing was also tightly constricted by the Anaconda, so many of his bones were broken as well. It was only due to his skill, Hardened Skin, that his pain was temporarily eliminated.

Zhang Mu's injury albeit lighter than the others', was quite serious as well. His left shoulder had suffered a tail strike. It was fractured and dislocated, causing his whole hand to be swollen blue. Chen Ling suffered only minor injuries, the only person who was not hurt at all being the long-range mage – Leng Yun.

Leng Yun had a doctor background, and thus she knew some first aid skills, which she immediately put into practice, giving a few people some temporary treatment.

Zhang Mu took out a bottle of Health Potion and gave it to Fatty, "The last Health Potion. Use it."

【Lower Common Health Potion】Restore 2 Health every second for 10 seconds. Interruptible by attacks.

Fatty's internal injuries were more serious. If not restored, his Health will decrease over time. Therefore the last Health Potion was given to him. In this world, Health Points did not recover automatically. As for Mana, it could only recover 1% every five minutes. Leng Yun being a level 5 Elemental Mage had maximum Health Points of only 38 life points, and mana as much as 75, but its recovery rate was too slow.

However, there was no other choice but to wait.

Zhang Mu's left shoulder was injured so much that he could no longer wield his sword. It was up to Leng Yun to go and collect the battle rewards now.

【Gigantic Snake Battle Hammer】 (Common Black Iron), Level 5 Single-handed weapon, +10 physical attack, 2% chance of causing dizziness per attack.

【Skill Upgrade Scroll LV1】 A magic scroll capable of upgrading a skill.

The single-handed battle hammer was especially useful for any knights or warriors equipped with a shield. Sun Bing had been using an ordinary hammer so far. Now he could finally change his weapon to a better one. One-handed weapons generally did not have high attacking power. The majority of blunt weapons had a stun effect, making them very suitable for Knights.

Zhang Mu was flabbergasted at seeing a Skill Upgrade Scroll as a drop from the Swamp Anaconda. After all, even a LV1 Skill Upgrade Scroll had such a high value on the market that it made it difficult to purchase. Its value between players was worth at least one F-class skill book. It was useless for Zhang Mu, as his most valuable skill 【God's Blessing】was already LV2. He saw that there was no real value in upgrading his 2 other skills, so this LV1 scroll was given to Leng Yun to upgrade her 【Healing Hand LV1】.

【Healing Hand LV2】, DD rank skill, Highest possible upgrade: LV5, consume 2 mana to recover 5 Health Points every second, 1 meter distance, zero cooldown.

LV2 Healing Hand was a lot stronger than LV1, with its distance of cast doubling and its healing effect becoming more potent. It upgraded from consuming 1 mana per second to restore 2 Health into consuming 2 mana person second to restore 5 Health.

Clutching his left shoulder, Zhang Mu while said, "We are all injured, so we cannot continue our journey. It's better to find a safe place to rest for now."

Everyone headed towards the middle of the field of reeds. They would be resting here until their injuries healed, before continuing to the other side of the bank. Players' constitutions were different from normal civilians'. As long as their Health Points did not hit zero, regardless of how severe their injuries were, they would not die.

"Captain, come over." Chen Ling used Fatty's jungle blade to clear away dense reeds for an open space to rest. Yet, to her surprise, she discovered "something special here."

Zhang Mu walked over, "What did you find?"

Chen Ling poked aside the reeds, showing six fist-sized green eggs on the surface. These were probably just some waterfowl eggs. It was hardly surprising nobody had focused on what exactly they were. Yet, around the eggs there appeared to be some kind of text inscription. Apparently, it was a game item!

[** Bird eggs], FF grade ingredients. Description: ** Bird is a type of gentle and wild birds. The egg is especially delicious and is a popular ingredient used by many.

Fatty asked curiously, "What is so strange about the egg?"

"Looks like it's some kind of system-produced ingredients. I don't know if it's any different from normal eggs. Let's try roasting it." Zhang Mu, pretending that he had not seen such an item before, turned towards Leng Yun, "You did not get hurt. Please help us find some reeds for us to start a fire."

"Are we roasting it for real?"

Leng Yun had treated Zhang Mu's injury recently. According to her experience, due to internal fracture, he should be hurting very badly from the injury. Even though she helped soothe some of the pain, any ordinary man would still be unable to bear it. It was alright that Zhang Mu's expression showed that he is fine, yet now? He actually had the mood to roast some eggs!?

But the captain had spoken. Leng Yun went off in search of some dry withered reeds. A small fire was raised, six whole eggs being roasted on top of it. After about ten minutes, when the eggs were fully roasted, the group actually realised there was some strange change to the eggs.

【Poor Roasted Egg】 , F grade food, food roasted poorly, Recover 12 Health Points, Increase 5 Maximum Health Points, Duration of 60 minutes, Unable to stack.

Seeing such effects, everyone immediately felt elated.

These processed ingredients certainly became wondrous food. Not only could they fill their stomachs, they could also recover their Health and increase a specific attribute for a certain time. Such a discovery certainly solved their current plight.

Zhang Mu already knew of the result. In fact, there were many system-determined ingredients. Most of it needed some form of special gathering skills in order to obtain them from monsters. Such freely-found food ingredients like the eggs were considered to be relatively rare.

After peeling off the eggshell, a jade-like delicate egg white was seen emitting out a very attractive aroma. Its texture was good and its taste was absolutely delicious. Such items were definitely worthy of being system-assessed food ingredients! Comparing these roasted eggs with the common chicken or duck eggs, the difference was as huge as between heaven and earth! The common eggs were simply tasteless! Ultimately, the most important part of the roasted eggs was not the taste, but the ability to restore Health Points.

Fatty ate two of the six roasted eggs, and licked his lips, with his eyes shining. "Fuck, I've lived for three decades, yet this is the first time I've ever eaten such delicious eggs. Eh? My injuries are not even hurting anymore!"

Zhang Mu announced, "We should look for more eggs. I believe that within such a huge area, there's definitely more eggs within."

"Yes!"

This is an exciting major discovery!

This kind of roasted eggs, with the ability to restore Health Points... Not only were they delicious, but they could also satiate one's hunger, and could be fitted easily into one's backpack. This was definitely a rare find! Especially when they would pass through the jungle, Leng Yun could now save her precious mana and use it only in dire situations!

It took over twelve hours of searching before they finally found 21 of【**Bird's Egg】!

For the first time, the five of them felt that being able to eat eggs was actually a blessing for them.

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These twenty-one【**Bird's egg】were a significant gain for the group.

They were even happier than if they had received equipment instead!

Such food didn't only satiate their hunger it also acted as a safeguard for their lives. Even though these items hadn't been obtained from battle their effects were exceptional!

Zhang Mu kept ten eggs and roasted the other eleven. These roasted eggs became food that could recover their health. After allowing the injured members to consume seven of the roasted eggs, their injuries fully recovered.

Fatty was puzzled as to why Zhang Mu would keep those ten eggs. He asked, "Boss, why did you keep ten eggs? They do not have any other effects from what I can see. We might as well just roast them all!"

Zhang Mu though shook his head, saying, "【**Bird's Egg】 is actually a FF-grade ingredient. After roasting, the roasted eggs actually dropped to F grade. 2 whole grades lower than before. I think that there are probably some conditions we are missing while cooking, in order to succeed in raising the grade of the end product to a high one. So let's save some of these ingredients for future use."

Sun Bing agreed, "What captain said is right. The Poor Roasted Eggs are of a lower grade. I was a chef in the past. If you were to provide a sort of wok and several other ingredients, I guarantee that I'd be able to prepare

more delicious meals!"

Fatty replied, "Ah, I understand."

Zhang Mu continued, "Another reason why I kept the ten was because when I tried placing them inside the gamer's bag I could only stack up ten eggs together. Ultimately these eggs only take up a single space in the bag."

Bird's egg was as big as a fist and surprisingly convenient to carry around. The only downside was how brittle they were. Also, if they were not consumed within a certain period, they would deteriorate in quality, losing their original properties. Only when placed within the gamer's bag could they be protected from being broken and from the passing of time.

The gamer's bag only has five inventory slots.

Zhang Mu's bag already contained a Skill's Upgrading scroll, a card, a map, and two empty slots meant for other weapons. If he were to roast all the eggs, it was inevitable that everyone's bags would be fully filled. If that was the case, then where could the battle rewards be stored?

"These ten Bird's egg will be kept in Fatty's bag." Zhang Mu then passed the four Poor Roasted Eggs to Chen Ling and Leng Yun, "The two of you will keep two eggs each."

Surprised, Fatty asked, "Why did you give me all the raw eggs?"

Zhang Mu glanced at him, saying with a straight face, "If the roasted

eggs were to be kept with you, I'm worried something would happen to them."

"What!? Do you have to be that direct? You guys still don't trust my character?" Fatty vowed, "This Fatty actually has a nickname known by many – The honest and reliable young master. Everyone can be rest assured that these eggs would be protected with my life! So you can just pass them to me."

Nobody was looking at him.

Zhang Mu stood up as he observed their current status. They were quite close to the opposite bank of the river. Near their locations there were some areas filled with reeds. They could search these areas for more eggs as they moved on. After all, these eggs were beneficial to them.

Once again, the five of them began gathering a large amount of reeds to craft a new raft. Even though the ropes made from crocodile skins were now fully submerged in the swamp, they had made ample preparations beforehand. Using the excess ropes they eventually crafted a new big raft for the entire group to sail on. Zhang Mu found a bamboo pole somewhere to use as the paddle. They soon set off on the newly-crafted raft.

The group of five began travelling vigilantly on the big raft. As they were on guard, their speed was relatively slow as they paddled their way across. Along the way they searched through three areas of reeds, and spent quite some time in order to obtain 16 [**Bird's egg].

At that time, the skies began darkening. It was extremely dangerous to

be out in the open within the jungle at night. Before the skies completely embraced the darkness, they would have to find a safe place to stay through the night. They did not have the luxury of travelling safely anymore.

Zhang Mu held onto the raft as they sailed towards the other bank. Gradually, the terrain became higher and the swamp became drier. In between them and the other bank was a full 200-300 meters of distance filled with pitch-black swamp mud. This meant that the mud did not have much water within.

"The swamp actually dried up?" Leng Yun tried inserting the bamboo pole into the swamp, yet over half of it could not penetrate through. Frowning, she said, "It's at least 2 meters deep, how are we going to move across?"

Zhang Mu started thinking deeply over the current situation. He tried testing the hardness of the swamp mud, nodding, "There's still a way across. As the swamp mud has been basking under the sun for a long period of time, the surface is relatively hard. Although it can not withstand the pressure of us walking across it, if we were to make use of the reeds around us to craft some flattened boards, the swamp mud will be able to somewhat support us. This will allow us to get across it without easily sinking."

The few of them started collecting reeds, tying them tautly with the remnant ropes and crafting them into a plank as long as a snow sled and as wide as a washing board. The bamboo poles were broken up into sections and connected to the reeds, then used as a sort of fan to aid them in advancing across the mud.

"This will do," Zhang Mu said after testing it out. "Let's go."

There were no problems for the rest, except for Fatty, who choked seeing the situation. He weighed a full 125 kilograms. Even though the crafted board was extremely big, moving across the mud was still quite problematic for him. Sun Bing and Zhang Mu were both helping Fatty spread out the pressure, step by step.

This method was quite useful. As long as they traversed slowly and did not exert too much force, the mud could still be quite stable.

The bank was near. There was hope.

Something unexpected happened halfway through.

The swamp mud in front of them and the surroundings suddenly turned over. Huge amounts of bubble and mud were effervescent up to the surface. They were surrounded by a dozen of strange-looking creatures that were standing up slowly on top of the mud. Similar to humans, they had a head and four limbs. It was just that they did not have the five sensing organs, toes or fingers. They were overflowing with pulpy mud, full of rotten water rhizomes. It seemed as if they had soaked for three days and three nights inside the mud, before surfacing.

"Damn!" Fatty cursed out loud, "Why must every single unlucky incident happen to us!"

【Swamp Monster】(Common), Level 8, 70 Health Points, 50 Mana, Attributes: ??, Skills: ??

Even though they were just ordinary-ranked monsters, their levels were not low. Thus, it was hard to determine if they were strong or not. Taking into consideration the fact that they were currently on the unstable swamp mud environment as well, battling against these monsters became much harder.

Chen Ling nervously said, "Captain, it seems like they are coming over. What should we do?"

Zhang Mu pulled her with him, "What can we do? Let's hurry and escape!"

The Swamp Monsters had extremely slow reactions. From the moment they had surfaced from the mud until now, instead of attacking, they actually lingered for over ten seconds in their current position before finally locking onto the positions of Zhang Mu and the rest. Even though their movements were slow, it was more than enough to surround the group of five.

Leng Yun brought out her Fish Bone Staff and utilised some of her recovered mana to cast an Ice Arrow towards the Swamp Monster. She killed it instantly with a shocking 80 damage. However this did not improve their situation at all. Now Leng Yun did not have any mana left. Even if she did have some leftover, the spell cooldown for an Elemental Mage was too long.

"Quick, let's escape!"

Zhang Mu and Sun Bing continued supporting Fatty while advancing.

They were merely 100 meters away from land.

One of the Swamp Monsters nearby suddenly stopped. It raised both of its arms and gathered some green-coloured liquid, then tossed it over at the group of five. Seeing the incoming ball of green liquid, Zhang Mu immediately dodged, letting the ball fall harmlessly into the mud. Before he had enough time to catch his breath from the immediate reaction, he frowned at seeing what had happened to his bamboo paddle.

The green ball of liquid had only brushed across the bamboo lightly, but the affected area of the bamboo broke apart under the liquid's powerful corrosion attribute.

Zhang Mu threw away the decimated bamboo. "Everyone, be careful. This is the 'Acid Bomb' spell. It could corrode our equipment away and it's quite damaging. Do not get hit by it."

Meeting the Swamp Monster in such an environment was already considered bad luck. What was worse was the fact that these monsters actually had a spell in their arsenal. Even though it was just a single spell and the damage caused by **【Acid bomb】** was not that high, it had the frightening corrosion attribute. This could reduce the players' defence, at the same time corroding the players' equipment, reducing its durability and attributes.

More and more Swamp Monsters began gathering acid bombs and tossing them at the five. It was fortunate that these monsters' consciousness was weak, as they could not aim accurately. More than half of the acid bombs completely missed the group, while the other half were being dodged.

"Whoosh!"

Suddenly, a ball of acid bomb came flying straight towards Sun Bing.

He did not have enough time to dodge, and could only defend himself with his shield. With a Splat, the glue-like acid stuck on the shield's surface, and soon 'Chi Chi' sounds of corrosion started coming from it. Soon enough, the shield's durability was reduced by four points and its defense by several points. Without a doubt, he felt heartbroken, since this item was his trademark.

Leng Yun urgently said, "Their numbers are increasing."

Zhang Mu urged the others on, "Hurry up! Hurry up!"

They could see that more and more Swamp Monsters were surfacing from the swamp. If they didn't hurry, they'd be surrounded. in no time. Once surrounded, it was only a matter of time before a barrage of acid bombs would corrode them to their bones

Only 40-50 meters left!

At this moment, a ball of acid bomb hit Fatty's thigh, corroding his pants and a large area of his flesh beneath. White smoke came out from his wound. Fatty cried out in pain, "Damn, my leg!"

Zhang Mu took out a bamboo stick and inserted into the mud before

saying, "It's not that deep here. Quickly! Go towards the bank!"

Everyone jumped into the mud and started making their way across towards land. The mud was only one meter deep here, so advancing was a doable task, especially with their new-found physical strength.

The number of Swamp Monsters continued increasing, causing the encirclement of the group to tighten up even further as the barrage of acid bombs became even denser.

Zhang Mu's back was hit by the acid bomb as well. It took every bit of his focus to endure the unimaginable pain and that burning hot feeling of decomposition. He did not know how his back looked though it was highly possible it had already rotted away.

"Ah, I can't endure any longer!"

Fatty's chest got hit by another acid bomb causing him to roar out his feelings. He used his skill, Brutal Charge to charge forward like a bulldozer. He left behind a deep empty gouge, relentlessly rushing towards the Swamp Monster who had just tossed the acid bomb on his chest. The force was so great that it crashed half of the monster. Without waiting, Fatty took out his great sword and slashed down at its middle.

The moment Zhang Mu touched the hard ground, he took out his dual-wield weapon and rushed forward with a blade flash, cutting many of the Swamp Monsters into pieces.

"Hurry up!"

The two of them opened up a path, exterminating all the Swamp Monsters ahead, so that the other three could safely advance towards land. Finally, they escaped their plight.

Over a hundred Swamp Monsters continued their way up the land, even though their movement speed was slow and could not catch up with the group of five.

Zhang Mu and Fatty continued their task of opening up the way. The Swamp Monsters only knew how to toss acid bombs, and nothing else. Their close-combat ability was terrible, allowing the two of them to exterminate over a dozen monsters despite the Swamp Monsters' high health.

From head to toe, Fatty cut a Swamp Monster down in two halves with a slash of his great sword, turning it back into a puddle of mud. Suddenly, something dropped from it. Looking carefully, he realised that, shockingly, a skillbook had actually dropped from the mob!

These small stingy monsters hadn't even dropped any gold pieces, yet now they dropped a skillbook?

Fatty was so happy that he momentarily forgot about his pain. Without hesitation, he grabbed the book.

The common Swamp Monster kept spawning up from the swamp, with numbers reaching up to 500 as of now. They were coming in all directions, chasing after the group of 5. Even though their speed was slow, they could still utilise their acid bomb in attacking. But because of the lack of spirit, the moment their target was of a distance away, the acid bomb's accuracy would be totally off, causing large amounts of acid bombs to miss their target.

"Do not stop, hide within the jungle ahead!"

Zhang Mu rushed into the jungle, yet many acid bomb balls still kept coming his way. Some of them hit the trees, while others landed on the ground. Some were even corroding the bushes in the jungle, boring holes and emitting a pungent smelling smoke. The Swamp Monsters' speed was too slow, and they could not catch up with the group. It was only after the five of them tunnelled deeper into the jungle that the Swamp Monster lost their target focus, leading them to wander aimlessly, before dissipating into the swamp once again.

Even though they were temporarily free from danger, the five of them did not dare to lower their vigilance, rushing madly for 20 minutes before finally deciding to stop.

Zhang Mu took a mild respite, and said, "We're quite far away. I don't think the Swamp Monsters can survive within the jungle. They won't chase us all the way in."

Fatty had been successively hit by the acid bombs, making some of

flesh from his thigh and chest to rot away. These affected areas were still bleeding profusely from the acid bombs. Zhang Mu and Sun Bing both had been hit only once, both suffering about the same degree of damage. As for Chen Ling and Leng Yun, they had been affected mildly by the acid, and had not sustained any heavy injuries.

Leng Yun still had a little mana left. Even though she could not cast the full healing hand, she could at the very least patch up some of the others' injuries, reducing the pain caused by the acid bombs.

After receiving minor care for his wounds, Fatty immediately laughed joyfully, "Hahahaha, this time, everyone must envy this brother Fatty's luck. I have actually gotten a skill book just now!"

"Ordinary monsters can also drop Skill Books?" Zhang Mu was shocked. The probability of such low grade monsters dropping skill books was so small that it was hard to find one skill book after killing thousands of monsters. It was similar to winning the lottery, yet Fatty had actually gotten one. "Quick, let's see what book it is."

Fatty took out the book, reading one through before saying, "Acid Bomb spell? Damn, isn't this those Swamp Monsters' technique?"

Zhang Mu nodded, "You are so unfortunate. This book is meant for mages."

Acid Bomb spell did not belong to any category of the Elements. Fundamentally, any classes of mage: Elemental Mage, Necromancer, Priest, Cleric, and even Summoners could learn this spell. This was a common-use spell for mages. Still, as Fatty was not a mage, he could only

give up the skill book in Leng Yun's favor.

【Acid Bomb Spell LV1】，F grade spell, Highest possible LV3, Attacking distance: 30 metres, 50% chance of affecting spirit, continuous damage for 5 seconds, chance of incurring corroding effect or decreasing durability of equipment, mana consumption: 3 mana, cooldown 10 seconds.

The total damage of a spell was usually determined by its fixed damage, plus the magic power of one's equipment and spirit attribute.

Acid bomb spells, however, belonged to another kind – with the fixed damage influenced only by one's spirit attribute, and none of the magic power of one's equipment. A mage with 50 points of spirit attribute could cause 25 damage with the acid bomb spell. Even this could sound great, 25 spell damage was actually very weak. After all, with 25 spell damage, unless the target's magic defence is 0, it was very rare for the target to have 25 health points reduced. However, in reality, a monster with 0 magic defence didn't exist.

Leng Yun's spirit attribute had not even reached 30 points. Against a monster of same level, using the Acid Bomb against a common-grade monster would at most cause 10+ damage. As for using it against an elite monster, an incurred damage of 5-8 was already quite good. Compared to her Ice Arrow, its attacking power was not even a third. Even though the damage of Acid Bomb was low, in reality, its usability was not too bad. It had a small cooldown and reduced mana consumption, allowing one to use it frequently in order to corrode the opponent's equipment, and consequently, its defence. For a team, this kind of ability was extremely suitable for support.

Fatty felt this was unfair and said, depressingly, "So unlucky. I thought I could use it!"

Zhang Mu replied, "There are as many as 20 different classes. Even though some skills can be used by all of them, the majority are specialised, and the drops from the monsters aren't catered to one's class at all. But precisely because of this, there is an even greater need to form a team. Let's go. We should find a place where to pass the night."

Only one hour was left before the skies would turn dark, and they had to find a place to stay through the night.

As they spent an hour searching through the jungle, they actually stumbled upon a cave. Its entrance was approximately 3 meters high, and a tad bit narrow in width, allowing only a person to cross through at once. The entrance was covered with large amounts of vines, so if one did not look attentively, it wouldn't be seen at all.

Zhang Mu used his sword to cut down the plants blocking the entrance of the cave, and looked inside before saying, "This place looks quite old. Let's stay here in the cave."

Seeing the pitch-black cave, Chen Ling felt fear creeping in her heart, "Captain, are you really sure there's nothing inside?"

"Judging by the looks of the entrance, these plants did not have any signs of being broken through, the vines were growing densely intertwined. No monsters have come out from this cave for 1-2 years, at the very least." Zhang Mu took out a torchlight from his waist and switched it on to have a better look. "We'll find out whether there is

anything inside once we enter. You guys keep up with me!"

They entered the cave through the narrow opening. Inside it was so dark that the torchlight's beam could not reach far enough. According to Zhang Mu's initial thoughts, as long as the cave had an area of a few square meters, the five of them could stay through the night. However, as they went deeper into the cave, instead of shrinking, the surrounding width of rocks actually became wider, before reaching a width where two people could walk shoulder by shoulder.

"Be careful." Zhang Mu frowned, softly saying, "This cave seems to be more than what meets the eye."

The group moved creped for over 20 meters before seeing something white underneath the rock ahead of them, which brought chills down everyone's spines.

Chen Ling gasped, her voice shaking, "C... Captain, why is there a skeleton there!"

Inside the cave lay a skeleton that seemed to be a human's, though it was larger than usual. Seemingly awoken by the group, a blue-coloured ghost flame suddenly ignited within the holes where the eyes would have been. With a 'kaka' sound, it rose to stand up.

【Skeleton soldier】(Black iron Elite), Level 5, 200 Health Points, 100 mana, description: Initially an elite soldier in its past life, it became an undead after being infected by the underworld's breath.

Chen Ling was so shocked that she screamed.

Leng Yun's expression turned pallid as she stood behind Zhang Mu. Sun Bing was feeling a tingling on his scalp as well.

Only Fatty was unafraid of this. He laughingly said, "Haha, just a level 5 Black Iron Elite monster? It looks so weak!"

The skeleton soldier raised its long rusty sword and came charging towards the five of them without saying anything. Even though it was a skeleton, its speed was quite fast. Fatty used his Brutal Charge, knocking against the Skeleton soldier, and reducing its health points by 18%. But being an undead, the skeleton was immune against daze effects, so he immediately reacted with a slash.

Fatty brandished his two-handed great sword, slashing the skeleton's waist and pushing it back a few steps. However, due to its hardness, only a few bones broke off. Seeing that this elite monster's capability was only this much, his confidence got a great boost, and Fatty raised his great sword for another attack.

Ge ge ge!

The skeleton suddenly brandished its sword explosively, stabbing into Fatty's chest, cutting through his leather armour and reducing 23% of his health. After getting injured, he immediately retreated. A weak glow suddenly appeared on the Skeleton soldier's longsword, before flying towards Fatty as a sword light. Sun Bing took this chance to step out, defending against that sword light with his shield. Without hesitation, he bashed his shield against the head of the skeleton, making it step

backwards several times.

Zhang Mu slid rapidly towards the skeleton and assaulted it with a series of fluid attacks. The skeleton's health finally dropped to zero. Its entire body began crumbling apart, turning into a pile of broken bones, on the cave's floor.

Everyone's experience bar increased by a margin. The only disappointment of this battle was that other than 2 gold pieces, nothing had dropped from the skeleton.

"So it was just a monster after all, and not a ghost." Leng Yun folded her arms in support of her towering breasts, and frowned once again. "Such a pity nothing dropped from the monster. Our luck doesn't seem to be good this time."

"No." Zhang Mu took up the gold piece, before continuing, "This elite monster is different from the elite monsters we've previously faced."

"Different how?"

Zhang Mu immediately replied, "Its combat power is much weaker, and it doesn't seem to be a solo kind of elite monster. This seems to belong more to those elite monsters that bunch up in groups – pack elites."

Leng Yun's eyes brightened, "Pack elites? So, this cave should have more such monsters?"

"En. We'll find out as we advance. Seems like we've strayed into a zone

of elites."

Sun Bing scratched his head, asking, "Zone of elites? Meaning an area full of elite monsters?"

"Indeed. The experience given by Elite monsters is several times higher than that given by common monsters. If this was a zone of elites, then its value would be extremely huge, as it would allow us to rapidly boost our levels. Even if the elite monsters belong to the pack category, the drops would be more rewarding than from any common monsters, with higher hopes of finding better items."

Everyone's eyes turned hot with fervor.

If it was like this, then it was the best!

Even though Skeleton soldier was a level 5 Black Iron Elite, its strength was far from the Black Bear they had faced in the past, but with similar experience. If they could hunt down 10-20 or more skeletons, then all of them would have hopes of reaching level 6!

"Damn, this is so awesome! What are we waiting for, then?"

Fatty's wounds stopped bleeding. He immediately turned lively, shouting out his happiness.

Zhang Mu continued, "This cave is definitely very deep. We won't last, passing through with this torchlight. Let's retreat and prepare a few fire torches."

The five of them exited the cave, looking for some easy to kindle pine, which was long-lasting as well. Only after preparing over a dozen torches did they enter the cave once again.

The cave was extremely dark. The fire torch could only brighten up the space around them up to a few meters. After walking for 5-6 minutes, they suddenly heard the sounds of moving bones. 3 skeletons stood up in front of them... 3 Skeleton soldiers, 3 Level 5 Black Iron Elite monsters.

The conjecture had been confirmed!

An ordinary cave was actually a zone of elites!

Compared to other elite monsters, Skeleton soldier was many times weaker. However, compared to common monsters, they were much stronger. Thus, the group could not afford to be careless when fighting against them. Of course, even when facing 2-3 Skeleton soldiers, Zhang Mu wouldn't feel threatened. The five of them moved forward together, and within 4-5 minutes, they ended the battle, with the 3 skeletons turning into three piles of bones.

On average, one out of several common monsters would drop some gold pieces. As for elite monsters, all of them dropped gold pieces, although not a lot. But still, it was much better than fighting against common monsters. What made everyone surprised, though, was that an equipment item actually dropped from one of the 3 Skeleton soldiers they had just fought.

【White-bone Necklace】(Common Black Iron), Level 5, +4 Physical

Attack, +4 Physical defence, Durability 20, Part of the White-bone Accessory set, Currently no set effects.

An equipment set!

Usually, any pieces of equipment belonging to a set would be worth several times that of common equipment. This was because with a set, there would be special effects that added additional properties to the user.

As for an accessory, it was even more rare and precious compared to any normal equipment.

Right now, in front of them there was actually an accessory equipment item belonging to a set!

Zhang Mu became excited as well.

Even though it was just a Level 5 Black Iron grade accessory set equipment, if he could obtain the entire set, then its value would increase tremendously – one could even exchange a greatly demanded FF grade skill book with it!

Still, the most important were its practical uses. If Zhang Mu could own the entire equipment set, then his combat power would raise to another level.

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Zhang Mu brought the small group onwards, killing off five more Skeleton soldiers that dropped a few gold pieces along with two pieces of equipment.

【White-bone Bracelet】(Common Black Iron), Level 5, Strength +1, Vitality +1, Agility +1, Spirit +1, Durability 20. White-bone Accessory set 2/3, currently no set effects.

【Sword of Skeleton soldier】(Common Black Iron), Level 5 one-handed sword, +10 Physical Attack, +1 Sharpness, 1% chance of incurring Curse effect, Durability 20.

White-bone Bracelet was one of the three accessories belonging to the White-bone set, with an effect of +1 to all attributes. 【Sword of Skeleton soldier】 was a one-handed sword that was longer than the Fine Iron Dagger and had greater attacking power that coupled with a chance of incurring the Curse effect. Zhang Mu equipped it by exchanging his previous-equipped Fine Iron Dagger for it.

Now, Zhang Mu wielded two long swords.

On his left hand, he brandished the Sword of Skeleton soldier.

On his right hand, he flourished the Dinichthys' Sword.

Usually, a one-handed weapon did not have a stronger attack power

and effect compared to a two-handed weapon, but when a person dual-wielded two swords, the damage ability was much stronger than a two-handed weapon. There were many dual-wielding classes – Thief, Assassin, Hit-man, Fighter, and Berserker. A thief was limited to dual-wielding daggers, an assassin limited to dual-wielding knives, a Hit-man limited to dual-wielding pointed-blades, a fighter limited to katars, and a Berserker limited to one-handed axes. Rangers though, being the most versatile class, had the majority dual-wielding long swords.

"Five percent left to level up," Zhang Mu checked his experience bar. Turning back, he asked, "What about you all?"

Fatty still needed 25% more, Leng Yun needed 31% more, and Sun Bing needed 39% more. Chen Ling, due to the fact she had just reached level 5 recently, needed 89% more experience to reach level 6. Regardless, farming Elite monsters definitely gave a feeling akin to sitting on a rocket.

Zhang Mu felt very satisfied. After resting for two minutes, they continued on.

Because the cave was so large, there should be quite a number of Skeleton soldiers. Every skeleton was a precious resource to them, giving them a boost to their experience and a large chance of dropping equipment.

Even though it was night, the small group was filled with fighting spirit. Without any thoughts of resting, they continued deeper into the cave, accompanied by a chilling cold. The cave became bigger and bigger. The air was not very putrid, seeing that the cave was not enclosed. Above them, crevices allowed some light from the moon to shine in, leaving mottled splotches of moonlight on the ground.

Soon after beginning their journey again through the cave, they found yet another three skeletons.

Chen Ling's face displayed a strange expression. Softly she said, "These skeletons seem kind of different."

The others noticed this strange discovery as well.

The Skeleton soldiers they had previously encountered had the majority of bones coloured greyish-white, without much luster. The weapons those skeletons carried were rusted, giving the sense of a lack of combat prowess. Two of these newly encountered Skeleton soldiers were much whiter than normal, and their swords appeared sharper and were without rust. Even the ghost-flame in their eyes glowed brighter, giving off the sense of being stronger than the Skeleton soldiers they had previously faced.

Apart from these two skeletons, an even more special skeleton stood between them.

This skeleton stood two meters high and carried a two-handed Broadsword. On its back, it wore a ragged scute laden cloak that looked like a fallen leaf with moths on it, battered and rent with different sized holes.. This skeleton gave off a sense of pressure given much stronger than the other two skeletons.

Zhang Mu gazed over at the three skeletons and read the appearing descriptions.

【Elite Skeleton soldier】(Bronze Elite), Level 5, 350 Health Points, 150 Mana, Description: An elite Skeleton soldier that is stronger than a normal Skeleton soldier.

【Skeleton Captain】(Bronze Elite), Level 7, 500 Health Points, 200 Mana, Description: The captain of an army in its past life, this Skeleton Captain was also a talented warrior with powerful skills and swordsmanship.

"Should be the mini-BOSS of this cave. Its power is not weak, let's be more careful."

Leng Yun asked, "How should we kill it?"

"We'll kill them one by one," Zhang Mu observed the surroundings, before pointing at the middle skeleton, "Sun Bing, use taunt to pull on the captain. You don't have to attack, just hold it for us. Fatty, Chen Ling, both of you will be responsible for the soldier on the left. Leng Yun will team up with me to dispose off the right soldier as quickly as possible. Any questions?"

"No!"

"That's good then. Let's start!"

The five of them split up with an understanding of what each other would be doing. Zhang Mu and Leng Yun flanked right while Fatty and Chen Ling flanked left. Holding his shield before him, Sun Bing forged straight ahead. Once the three skeletons became alarmed, Sun Bing used

his Taunt skill on the captain.

With the ghost-flame flickering wildly within the eyes of the Skeleton Captain, it immediately utilised the technique of a swordmaster, **【Charge】**. Within the blink of an eye, the Skeleton Captain rushed to the Sun Bing's front, hacked its sword at his shield, and caused Sun Bing to retreat a few steps. The Skeleton Captain did not wait for Sun Bing to stabilise before forming a few apparition with its Broadsword, causing a few bright sword lights to appear suddenly.

Fierce Wind Combo Slash!

Peng Peng Peng Peng!

Under the defence of his shield, Sun Bing withstood four continuous fierce attacks which reduced his health points by a quarter. Sun Bing would have had a very difficult time surviving a direct attack without his shield. The technique was an extremely powerful one that boasted a fast speed and was difficult to evade.

The Skeleton Captain had a relatively high strength that was easily comparable to other lone-based Elite monsters.

Sun Bing could not maintain this for long!

Alarmed by the fervency of the Skeleton Captain's attack on Sun Bing, the two Elite Skeleton soldiers rushed toward their captain's aid, swords in hand.

Zhang Mu shouted, "Quick, attack!"

Fatty used his Brutal Charge and stopped one of the soldiers from continuing. Chen Ling aided by the side. Zhang Mu slid quickly towards the other, slashing a few times with his swords, causing some damage. The Skeleton soldier quickly turned his attention to Zhang Mu, letting go of Sun Bing before fiercely attacking.

Bronze-grade Skeleton soldiers had higher health, higher mana, and higher attributes than the Black iron-grade Skeleton soldiers. They had greater attacking power, greater agility, and thus, had greater combat power by more than twice that of the Black iron-grade soldiers.

Leng Yun sprayed the Acid bomb on the Elite Skeleton soldier, not causing much damage but effectively reducing the Elite Skeleton soldier's defenses. She then cast her Ice arrow right at it. An Elemental Mage's damaging ability was really too terrifying. With this action, about 60 of the Elite Skeleton soldier's health was shaved off. The only drawback to the Acid bomb spell was its long cooldown, though. After Leng Yun's initial attack, Zhang Mu was responsible for finishing the battle.

The Elite Skeleton soldiers had reduced defense inflicted by the Acid bomb and reduced movement by the Ice arrow, thus reducing its combat power. Zhang Mu certainly had the capability to solo it thereafter. The two swords in his hands glowed with mild green blade light, slashing right at the shoulder of the skeleton soldier, shaving off 36 of its health.

Elite Skeleton soldiers were undead and thus, did not feel any pain nor any terror or other emotions. Even after having the sword cut on its body, it did not have any negative or unfavorable reactions as if it was not being attacked at all. Raising the sword in its right hand, the skeleton

fiercely stabbed outwards, resulting in a greyish sword light appearing from the blade. Even though the Ice arrow slowed down its movement, its current motion was still faster than an average person would be able to react to. Zhang Mu immediately dodged it before using his right hand to jab at the head of the skeleton, leaving behind a sword mark.

The Skeleton soldier did not care about the damage done to its body. Waving its right arm wildly, sword lights followed by more sword lights began flying forward. They came fast and furious with plenty of strength. Yet to Zhang Mu, the skeleton's movement was stiff and predictable. With half of its health now gone, Zhang Mu was able to easily dodge the attacks.

"Peng! Peng! Peng!"

The long sword met with another long sword in the air a few times, generating sparks from the clash.

Seeing a flaw, Zhang Mu took advantage of it and fended off the attacking skeleton soldier before beginning a round of onslaught that brought the skeleton soldier's health to zero. It finally dropped onto the floor as a pile of bones. The massive amount of experience given by its death brought Zhang Mu to level up to level 6, increasing his health, his mana, and his attributes tremendously.

The cooldown of Leng Yun's Acid bomb spell ended. Immediately, she cast it on the other soldier. Zhang Mu rapidly slid towards it, teaming up with Fatty and Chen Ling in attacking the skeleton. Within 10 seconds, the skeleton soldier fell onto the ground.

Now, all that was left was the strongest Skeleton captain.

The Skeleton Captain had at least four to five different techniques. All of these techniques could be categorised under the skills of a Swordsman. The strongest skill, Fierce Wind Combo Slash, consisted of four continuous attacks which added up to a great deal of damage. Sun Bing had a hard time standing against this powerful attack. If it were the others who got hit by this technique, they would certainly die.

Zhang Mu shouted, "Sun Bing, move backwards!"

Leng Yun shot out an Ice arrow, reducing the movement of the Skeleton Captain. Sun Bing hurriedly retreated. He was bleeding and did not have any capability to continue battling. Zhang Mu and Fatty – the two main damage-dealers – immediately took over Sun Bing's position.

"Brutal Charge!"

Fatty charged right at the body of the Skeleton Captain, knocking it a few meters backwards. He then brought up his great sword and slashed right at the head of the skeleton. The Skeleton Captain reacted with a slash right at Fatty's great sword before suddenly turning its blade, cutting Fatty's chest and destroying Fatty's leather armour. Blood began to ooze from the injury, and Fatty's health points dropped by almost 40%!

"Damn, that was some perverse damage!"

Fatty was heavily injured and thus, began retreating. The Skeleton Captain did not give him any chances. With a charge, it rushed towards

Fatty, brought up its Broadsword, and used its – Fierce Wind Combo Slash!

“Not good!” Fatty’s expression changed.

Right at this moment, Zhang Mu utilised his God’s Blessing and slid between Fatty and the captain. The four sword lights landed on Zhang Mu’s body and were nulled by his invulnerability. Even still, it caused Fatty’s soul to almost fly off as he almost lost his life. Thankfully, Zhang Mu saved him right in the nick of time.

“Be careful.”

Zhang Mu wielded his swords and began battling the Skeleton Captain by himself. Only after Fatty recovered did he come back to the battle. Chen Ling was there to help the two of them as well. The Skeleton Captain’s combat power was really strong; Zhang Mu had to attack and withdraw in random and unexpected patterns to avoid the sword light. The Ice arrow reduced the Skeleton Captain’s movement, the Acid bomb reduced its defense, and Taunt was used at pivotal moments in taking away the aggro of the skeleton. The whole battle lasted for five to six more minutes before, the Skeleton Captain’s health finally dropped to zero. Two pieces of equipment dropped out after it perished. One item was a skill book.

【FF-grade Skill Book, Fierce Wind Combo Slash】, Learning requirements: Strength 15, Agility 20. Class restriction: Swordsman, Ranger.

【White-bone ring】(Common Black Iron), Level 5, +10 Health, +10 Mana,

Durability 20, Part of the White-bone accessory set.

【Skeleton Captain's Broadsword】(Common Black Iron), Level 5 two-handed sword, +18 Attack, 2% chance of critical when attacking, Durability 30.

After the death of Skeleton Captain, Fatty leveled up to 6, allowing him to fully recover from his injuries.

Zhang Mu felt extremely pleased!

Finally... finally a Ranger's skill book dropped!

A technique that was relatively powerful in offense was exactly what Zhang Mu needed now!

Zhang Mu's strength had already exceed 15, and his agility had already exceeded 20. All the requirements were met for him to learn the skill book.

【Fierce Wind Combo Slash LV1】, FF-grade skill, highest possible LV3, Explosively continuously attack, every attack cause 50% of one's attacking power + 50 strength attribute's damage, Total number of combo slash is determined by the user's agility and attack speed, with a minimum of at least two times and a maximum of six times. Mana consumption: 5, cooldown 45 seconds.

At the same time, the last item required to complete the White-bone accessory set was dropped as well!

Within the three accessories of the set, the necklace increased the user's physical attack. The bracelet increased all of the user's attributes, The ring increased the user's health and mana. Once the three pieces of accessories were worn together, the set effect would appear.

【White-bone accessory set】 During attack, 10% chance of incurring twice the damage.

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The white-bone accessory set did not increase attributes and attacking power, but it did provide a 10% chance of doubling damage. This effect was quite practical since it was not limited to the type of attack – physical or magical. On average, one out of ten hits would have double the damage.. To a warrior with a fast attack speed, the effect would be frequently activated. To a mage using an area of effect spell attack, targeting multiple enemies would ensure quite a high chance of activating the effect. Ultimately, the accessory's effect would certainly increase anyone's damage output.

And seeing that this was merely a level 5 Black Iron set.

Such an effect could be considered as amazing already!

Zhang Mu equipped the accessory set, allowing his attacking power and attributes, health and mana to all increase. Coupled with having leveled up to level 6 recently, his overall combat strength had a tremendous growth.

The Skeleton Captain had also dropped a Broadsword, with its attributes being relatively all right. Zhang Mu passed the Broadsword to Chen Ling for her to use. She was already a level 5 swordswoman, and using an axe was rather lacking for her. Furthermore, with a higher attacking power, the Broadsword would definitely transform Chen Ling's damage output.

Now that the small group consisted of two level 6 players and that Zhang Mu's other empty equipment slots were filled, the overall

combined combat power of the team made a quantitative leap upwards.

The five of them took a breather before continuing deeper into the cave.

Not long after, a Skeleton soldier appeared within sight.

"You all stand ground. Let me try out my newfound combat power!"

Zhang Mu charged at the Skeleton soldier, dual-wielding his long swords. The soldier quickly noticed Zhang Mu and reacted, brandishing its own long sword towards him. Taking a deep breath, Zhang Mu raised his two swords, activated his technique, Assassination, and continued with his newfound technique – Fierce Wind Combo Slash.

"-18 ! "

"-15 ! "

"Set effect activated, -34!"

"-17 ! "

"-12 ! "

"Sword of Skeleton Soldier's effect activated!"

Five rays of sword light hit the Skeleton soldier, totalling up about 96 terrifying damage!

Zhang Mu's Fierce Wind Combo Slash actually allowed him to continuously slash out five times. Fierce Wind Combo Slash's attacking frequency was determined by one's agility and equipment attacking speed. Before level 10, this technique would have a hard time exceeding three strikes. Because the Skeleton Captain they had encountered before was an Elite monster, it had a faster attack speed and agility than Zhang Mu. Yet it could only hit a maximum of four times.

Zhang Mu was only able to strike out five times because of the crucial technique **【Assassination LV1】**. This technique did not inflict additional damage, yet it could increase one's attacking speed tremendously, stacking with any effects brought about by other techniques. Previously, Zhang Mu was precisely using this effect of combining both **【Assassination LV1】** and **【Fierce Wind Combo Slash LV1】**, allowing the stacking of both techniques to let him strike out five times. Certainly, without the aid of Assassination, he should only be able to at the most, strike out three to four times.

During the third attack, the set effect activated, doubling his damage.

And during the fifth attack, his Sword of Skeleton soldier's effect activated.

The so-called curse effect was primarily referring to **【Petrification】**, **【Weakening】**, **【Slow】**, **【Numbing】** and a dozen more negative effects. Activating the curse effect was not a sure thing every time. Inherent within was a risk of failure. When Zhang Mu used his long sword to attack, that 1% chance of inflicting a curse effect ended up being the

effect of Petrification.

This unlucky Skeleton soldier was first damaged by the Fierce Wind Combo Slash, causing half of its health to be depleted. Before it was able to raise its weapon to react, its entire body had long been plated by a layer of stone-grey colour, as if it became an immovable sculpture.

Zhang Mu did not miss out on this opportunity. He immediately slashed out four to five times with his swords. By the time the curse affliction ended, the Skeleton soldier's health had depleted to near zero. With a cold ray slashing out of Zhang Mu's Dinichthys' Sword on the cervical spine of the skeleton, the skeleton's spine immediately fractured, decapitating its skull from its body where it landed on the floor a dozen meters away. The flame in its eyes flickered for a while before extinguishing completely.

The rest of the group stared in a stupor. This was still a level 5 Black Iron Elite monster, and yet, it did not even have the chance to retaliate. Within three seconds, it was cut down by the sword. This result seemed too exaggerated to the rest!

Sun Bing laughed out, "Captain is becoming stronger!"

Leng Yun gazed upon Zhang Mu's figure before her. Although it did not look sturdy, it still gave her the feeling of safety. She nodded in agreement.

Chen Ling's expression turned ardent, emitting a deep look of admiration. Towards Zhang Mu's talent and strength, she felt only admiration. She tightened her hold of the sword in her hand. If only... she

had such strength, wouldn't that be so much better?

Fatty dismissed Sun Bing's words, twitching his lips and saying, "Isn't that obvious?"

Zhang Mu did have the strength to treat the Skeleton Soldier as if it were a common monster. But of course, this kind of victory would happen only under the right set of conditions. The fact that he was able to end of the Skeleton soldier so quickly was because he borrowed the strength of the Fierce Wind Combo Slash and the fact that the special effects activated two times during the fight. Under normal conditions, such occurrence would not be so easily replicated.

Zhang Mu took up the rewards – White-bone accessory set bracelets, increasing all attributes by 1. Right now, the person who needed an all-round improvement the most was Sun Bing, and thus, he passed it to him.

The Skeleton cave still had a very long pathway, with the possibility of many Skeleton soldiers and other stronger Skeleton creatures to encounter.

The five of them continued without rest, killing everything in their way – exterminating seven more Skeleton soldiers. Leng Yun and Sun Bing both leveled up, allowing their conditions to fully recover with an increase in strength to a higher level.

These Skeleton soldiers did not drop any pieces of equipment other than two White-bone rings. Zhang Mu gave one of the rings to Sun Bing and the other to Leng Yun. The White-bone ring's effect was quite good –

increasing the health and mana by 10. Leng Yun by nature did not have much of either health or mana.

The cave became wider the deeper they went. When they passed by a turn, an area of approximately 100 meters square appeared in front. Three skeletons were standing in the middle, with a few meters-wide slit in the ceiling that allowed the moonlight to shine down on the skeletons. This moonlight highlighted the forest-white coloured of the skeletons and the ghost-flame jumping about in their eyes. The skeletons gazed right at their direction. This entire scene actually gave the group goosebumps.

However, Zhang Mu did not worry too much.

The Undead's five senses were useless. Instead, they utilised some special methods to perceive their surroundings. Thus even though the skeletons were in front of them, the skeletons fundamentally could not see anybody. However, should they enter the skeleton's area of perceiving, even from the back, the skeletons would also realise their presence.

These three skeletons were different from normal. Two of them had spears in their hands, while one of them, the one standing in the middle, wore a red-coloured flowery long robe with a two meters long staff.

【Spear Skeleton】(Bronze), Level 6, 500 Health Points, 200 Mana,
Description: Initially a spearman in its past life and part of the main force of the army.

【Skeleton mage】(Bronze), Level 8, 400 Health Points, 400 Mana,
Description: Initially a mage of the army in its past life with capable magic abilities.

These three skeletons were stronger than the three skeletons led by the Skeleton Captain. Furthermore, one of them was actually a Skeleton mage, which obviously was a Mage-class monster and the most troublesome out of all.

In the past, dealing with any mage-type monster was not an easy task. The attack power of a Mage-class monster was too high. With just a spell or two, any ordinary person would die.

As for the Spear Skeleton, its health was relatively high, and that it was wearing armour. From the description, during its past life, it was actually a spearman. A spearman and a knight were quite similar to each other—just that the first did not have shield and its primary weapon was solely a long spear. Thus, it could be considered a high-health type of monster. According to their earlier tactics, they would kill off the small fries before facing the stronger monster. However this time round, they were instead afraid that they would first turn into slag from magic spells before they could finish off the Spear Skeletons. Skeleton mage was, after all, an extreme threat to them. If they did not finish it off in time, the team would eventually be annihilated.

"We'll first focus fire on finishing off that mage!" Zhang Mu rapidly analysed the situation, before delegating the roles, "Sun Bing, attract the monster's attention first. Your task is to pull those two Spear Skeletons. Chen Ling, aid Sun Bing. Fatty, Leng Yun and me will focus on the mage. Once the mage dies, there should be no threat coming from the two Spear Skeletons."

They nodded.

Zhang Mu ordered, "Fatty's Brutal Charge must not be used randomly. This technique could actually create a one second Stun effect. Even though it has no effect on Undead, it could still break through the mage's spell during critical moments."

"I understand."

"Then let's go. Everyone must be careful."

Sun Bing went in first with his shield. At about 60-70 meters away from the skeletons, it appeared that the skeletons noticed him, with the two of them bringing down their two-meters long spears, standing firm on the ground, before charging forward. They stabbed forward with their long spears, a tinge of white glowing on the spear-head.

This technique was similar to a Swordsman's Charge; it could be said to be a common skill between knight and spearman as well.

Sun Bing shouted out, "This is troublesome. They even have this kind of technique!"

At this moment, the Skeleton Mage raised its staff, forming a 50 point defence mana shield. The mage called forth a bunch of flames with the staff, brightening up the entire pitch-black cave and forming a fire cone. With a 'Sou', the mage flew over.

【Fire Cone】was known as the strongest single-target attacking spell in the past.

Sun Bing's shield was burned until it became charcoal-black. The flame set itself upon Sun Bing's clothes, damaging him with that powerful magical spell and reducing his health by half.

The two Spear Skeletons attacked, one after another. With a stab of its spear, one of the skeletons hit Sun Bing's shield, causing nine damage. The other spear plunged upon Sun Bing's thigh, causing 18 damage. Sun Bing's activated his Hardened Skin, thus ensuring that he did not feel any pain. Chen Ling hacked her sword at the body of one of the Spear Skeleton, causing a mere a dozen points of damage. With an attack of the spear, the skeleton retaliate, stabbing at her abdomen. Chen Ling immediately retreated behind Sun Bing. Lifting up their spears, the two Spear Skeleton once again began their round of attacks.

"Fierce stab!"

The two long spears hit upon the shield, causing the shield to be almost ripped through. Under this great strength, Sun Bing was pushed back until he fell onto the ground. At this, Chen Ling could only firmly plant her feet and momentarily defend against the Spear skeletons. It was fortunate that their speed was relatively slow, allowing her to barely exchange a few moves with them.

The Skeleton mage was about to cast its spell. Before that, Zhang Mu immediately slid across the cave towards it, activated his Fierce Wind Combo Slash, destroyed the mana shield, and caused an additional 30+ damage. Leng Yun hurriedly took this opportunity and cast an Ice Arrow and Acid Bomb, reducing the Skeleton mage's health to 75%. Fatty followed up close behind.

"Frost Breath!"

The Skeleton Mage emitted a breath of fog from within its body. Zhang Mu and Fatty felt the bone-penetrating cold as a layer of frost formed upon their bodies. The breath numbed their legs, causing their movement to momentarily stop .

Fatty angrily exclaimed, "Damn! Why would it have this kind of spell?"

The Skeleton Mage utilised this opportunity to retreat a dozen meters before suddenly casting a Fireball, hitting Zhang Mu's chest. The flame wrapped the top half of Zhang Mu's body, immediately shaving off 50% of his total health. At the same time, the burn effect of the flame continued to reduce Zhang Mu's health over time. The flame burned Zhang Mu's leather armour. An ordinary person would not be able to bear this agonising pain. The Skeleton mage raised its staff. Countless sparks formed in the air within a two meters area in front of it. The Skeleton mage controlled these sparks, and they began gathering on the palm of its left hand, accumulating until the sparks formed a fist-size Fireball.

"Fireball Explosion!"

This seemed to be the strongest attacking technique of an Elemental Mage in the early days!

This spell's attacking power was more than twice that of the Ice Arrow spell, coupled with its area of effect, even Sun Bing would be instantly killed by it!

Zhang Mu shouted, "Fatty!"

Having just recovered from the Frost condition, Fatty immediately used his Brutal Charge, enveloping his body with a red glow before charging upon the body of the Skeleton Mage. Undead could not be stunned, but this Brutal Charge did interrupt the mage's spell by knocking it down on the floor. That Fireball Explosion immediately dissipated into nothing. Fatty took this chance to inflict some damage with his Great sword, slashing against the body of the mage, causing 25 damage – about 5% of its health.

